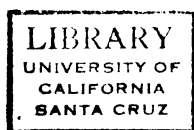


UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA CRUZ



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HUI-LAN KOO





Hui-lan Koo

HUI-LAN KOO

[MADAME WELLINGTON KOO]

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY AS TOLD TO

MARY VAN RENSSELAER THAYER

DIAL PRESS



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PART ONE

Across the Java Sea

(1.)

Price on His Head

My grandfather was a rebel. On a dark secret night he fled from China with a price on his head. Even the briefest delay might have meant capture and execution by the Imperial Manchu soldiery. Punishment meted out to rebels in those days was no quick and painless beheading but an exquisite, long-drawn torture. Often the victims were fastened to crosses while strips of skin were peeled from their bodies. From dawn through the sun scorched hours they were pitilessly exposed to the public gaze until death came mercifully at sundown. Hidden in the hold of a lumbering junk, Oei Tjie Sien lay motionless, thinking of these things until the lifting swell of the waters told him they had passed

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safely through the inner bay of Amoy's sheltered harbor and were thrusting out into the wide China Sea.

The son of a petty government official, my grandfather grew up in a back country village two days' journey by sedan chair from the South China port of Amoy. Young and hotblooded, he joined the T'ai-p'ing rebels in their struggle to overthrow the Manchu dynasty. He was a good soldier and soon rose to a position of command. Headed by the curious, fanatical Hung Hsuits'uan who a hundred years ago was pleased to call himself the Heavenly King, the T'ai-p'ings fought well and succeeded in capturing Nanking, China's ancient capital. There the Heavenly King set himself up as a rival to the Manchu Emperor and for fifteen years South China was cruelly laid waste by his army. So desperate was the struggle between rebel and Manchu follower that twenty million Chinese were slaughtered during the T'ai-p'ing ascendancy. When the rebels were finally suppressed their leader managed to poison himself leisurely and luxuriously by swallowing gold leaf, but the rank and file were tracked down and exterminated ruthlessly. One by one my grandfather's small band of soldiers were captured and quartered. When his command had dwindled to an ineffectual few, he made his escape by stealing aboard a laden junk waiting to sail from Amoy on the out-going tide. My grandfather took no possessions, owned only the shabby clothing which covered his thin body. No silver coins jingled comfortingly in his pockets. To what strange port of call this awkward craft might carry him he knew not and cared little. The junk creaked on day after day through gentle seas. Now and again the wind fell to a mere whisper and the rust-colored sails flapped disconsolately against the mast. Seventy Chinese passengers paced patiently on the high curved poop. Pigeons, ducks, pigs penned in bamboo cages

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were stacked high in the bow; their clamor never ceased and their odor offended even the least sensitive nostrils. At mealtimes—passengers squatted on deck cooking their economical portions of rice over tiny charcoal braziers, pinching a few precious tea leaves into thimble-sized cups of scalding water. Most of them were poor, many of them like Oei Tjie Sien were seeking a friendly refuge far away from their troubled homeland.

After weeks of slow sailing, Java, lush and green, emerged from the warm seas, its high mountains curving proudly towards the shimmering skies. Oei Tjie Sien leaned far over the rail for his first glimpse of this new land. The junk wallowed along under the lee of the coast almost motionless, barely skirting the froth topped breakers. Passing in calm procession were dense jungles sweeping boldly to mountain summits; terraced hillsides stepping carefully down to the shore. The flat valleys were checkered with rice *sawahs*, some of them vivid emerald, others fallow under sheets of shining water. On the nearer slopes an occasional native ploughed behind his water buffalo, the farmer a speck of animate color, his drab beasts minute as ants. Then for a brief moment the green brilliancy would be blotted out by a somber teak forest, its smooth-trunked trees naked of leaves and desolately gray.

Three months out of China the junk reached harbor in Semarang, a bustling, opulent Javanese port. Tjie Sien, thinner and shabbier than when he left Amoy, stepped ashore impatiently. Before him the town, so neatly Dutch, glistened prosperously in the sun, holding out promise of safety and a good livelihood. Tjie Sien made his way along the harbor in search of work. Broad shoulders and a powerful build were his only recommendations but before the day was out they had gained him employment as a coolie. By nightfall

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he had made friends with other, earlier fugitives who took him to a Chinese camp, a primitive place outside the city where for a few coppers, homeless men could lie close-packed on mats under a flimsy bamboo roof. Gratefully he fell asleep. At daybreak, after a bowl of tea, Tjie Sien returned to his hard labor. Throughout the long hours he strained at the tow-ropes of an endless succession of junks. The sun blazed on his bare back, his only relief was wading shoulder high into the muddy waters to shove clear the clumsy hulks when they became mired. At night, back in camp, he threw himself down exhausted, oblivious to the shrill chatter of his fellow exiles.

The city was to be kind to him. Semarang attracted all the trade of Central Java and shipped coffee, tobacco, indigo, sugar and rice to faraway ports. Its wealth in those days was largely controlled by Chinese. Above the harbor, fronted with tight-packed Dutch buildings, sprawled the Chinese quarter with its sharp-roofed houses, its shaded gardens. Here Tjie Sien found a surer means of livelihood. With his small hoardings he purchased cheap porcelain saucers and bowls which he peddled from door to door in baskets hung from a bamboo yoke. He bargained doggedly, haggled shrewdly over each copper coin, then re-invested infinitesimal profits in more bowls and saucers and small packets of rice. Slowly, painstakingly, Tjie Sien managed to save.

The kindly owner of the camp was an elderly rebel who had left China for Semarang years before. His family included several daughters of marriageable age. Suitable sons-in-law were hard to find and his search for them led him to a quiet but constant inspection of the young men living under his bamboo roofs. One evening, chancing to pass close to my grandfather as he lay asleep the proprietor was startled

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to see a faint aura of light hovering about Tjie Sien's head. Puzzled and a little frightened, he crouched down and studied the youth's features. For several nights the old man returned, to find that this strange phenomenon still persisted. Finally, he made up his mind that this mysterious light was a propitious rather than an evil omen. He woke Tjie Sien and put him through a searching catechism. They talked throughout the night in hushed tones so as not to disturb the sleeping men. My grandfather told of his past and of his future ambitions, and as the sudden tropical dawn broke, the old man proposed that Tjie Sien become his son-in-law. Without a moment's hesitation the offer was accepted.

True to Chinese custom my grandfather never saw my grandmother until the day they were married, and since they were all poor, the usual elaborate wedding ceremonies were dispensed with. Tjie Sien and his bride started life together empty-handed. They both shared a will to survive and a determination to succeed. As the daughter of an exiled rebel, my grandmother was more independent than most Chinese women of her generation. She always had worked unceasingly, and so was ideally fitted to share her husband's hard life. The young couple moved to the Chinese quarter of Semarang and in the dark cubbyhole which served as their home set up shop. The same porcelain bowls, the inevitable sacks of rice made up their stock in trade. Tjie Sien would be up before daylight. First he must bargain in the markets before setting out on his rounds. By now a Javanese coolie accompanied him, carrying his wares in huge baskets suspended from either end of the wide bamboo yoke. Though their business was growing, my grandparents did not dare indulge in more than the barest necessities. They lived frugally on tea and rice. Night after night as Tjie Sien worked late straightening his accounts he pulled out the desk drawer

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and leaned his flat stomach against it to ease the hunger pains. His wife, worn from keeping shop and tending the wants of her growing family, would rise swiftly from her pallet bed whenever the baby cried, lest his wails disturb her husband's calculations. To and fro she walked, rocking the child in her arms, often falling asleep as she stood, her tired back propped against the wall.

As time passed Tjie Sien's business prospered, his grim struggles lay behind. Each year he put aside what he could towards the sum required by the Manchu Government for a pardon. Without one he could not return to China and fulfill the ancestral tradition of presenting his eldest son to his parents before they died. Tjong Ham was seven when his father journeyed back with his whole family to the small village in the hills behind Amoy. It was only a short visit—Tjie Sien could not stay long. By now he was well on his way to becoming the richest rice merchant in Central Java.

My father, Oei Tjong Ham, was the elder of two brothers. He was brought up in the Chinese quarter of Semarang in an immense house which Tjie Sien had purchased when his increasing fortune demanded an impressive setting. Here Tjong Ham grew into a wild, restless boy, resenting his father's severity and frugality, rebellious against his old-fashioned, strait-laced ideas. But Tjie Sien tolerated no nonsense from his sons, who feared him and believed him capable of inflicting severe bodily punishment should they cross his will.

As Oei Tjong Ham grew older and more daring, he would steal from the house after his parents were asleep and hurry to one of Semarang's many gambling houses. There he would change his long Chinese dress for a starched

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white linen suit cut in European fashion, wind his thick queue tightly around his head and cover this cumbersome coiffure with a swagger cap. The fever for gambling was an all-absorbing passion and completely possessed Tjong Ham. Through the day he kept to himself, mooning about the house, scarcely bothering to conceal his impatience for the night. Tjie Sien soon learned of his son's behavior and determined to stop it. Marriage and business responsibilities were a sure cure for young flightiness. Tjong Ham was eighteen, it was time he settled down.

Though a wife had already been chosen for him, Tjong Ham was as yet unaware of this interesting fact, since his parents never would have dreamed of consulting him on such an important matter. Tjie Sien was wealthy enough to toss aside all consideration of money in his search for a daughter-in-law, and for months he had been conducting discreet inquiries in an endeavor to find the prettiest girl in Semarang. His search was made difficult, since girls in those days, once they had reached their 'teens, remained in partial seclusion within doors. Finally Tjie Sien learnt of the Goei family, new arrivals from China, who were poor, happy-go-lucky and had been blessed with no less than sixteen flourishing children. Among the sixteen were a scattering of sisters whose reputation for good looks was the envy of the Chinese quarter of Semarang. Graciously, yet not without a touch of condescension, Tjie Sien informed their delighted father that he was willing to marry his eldest son to the most beautiful daughter. Bing-noi, my mother, proved to be the willing victim, and she was beautiful indeed. Slim, tiny, scarcely fifteen, her delectable ivory-white complexion was as much admired as her disturbing, lustrous eyes. But it was her jet-black hair which other women coveted most. She wore it in a heavy coil at the nape of her neck, and

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when she loosened her heavy gold hairpins it fell softly to the ground, shrouding her completely down to the soles of gaily embroidered shoes. Bing-noi's name meant Victoria. It suited her imperious nature exactly, for she was born to have her own way.

My father greeted the announcement of his forthcoming marriage with utter indifference. It did not seem strange to take to wife a girl whom he had never seen. It was fitting that his bride should be chosen for him. Such things were but part of the pattern of life. Tiong Ham went on his way undisturbed, his only thought being to ignore the elaborate wedding preparations which were turning the quiet, well-ordered house into a beehive of furious activity.

Meanwhile, Tjie Sien, hoping to wean his son away from nightly dissipations, loaded increasing business responsibilities on the boy's none too willing shoulders. One day, shortly before the wedding, Tiong Ham was sent to collect rent on their various family properties. It was his first important commission and involved handling an appreciable sum of money. The properties were scattered far apart, so Tiong Ham, delighted to have escaped from his father's watchful eye, loitered pleasantly on his rounds. He sauntered into Semarang after dusk, carrying some ten thousand Dutch guilders in a stout canvas bag. His favorite house of chance, brilliantly lit within, was just opening for the evening's trade. As he walked by, the sack of silver guilders grew too heavy to hold. Before he knew it he found himself inside, and unfastened the leather thong around his canvas money bag. Tiong Ham played on and on, first lightheartedly, then as his luck changed, plunging wildly, throwing handfuls of guilders on the table in a frenzied effort to win back his losses. At midnight he stumbled out into the hot, muggy street. When he looked down at the gaping canvas bag still

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grasped in his hand, the enormity of his offense hit him like a blow. Despair engulfed him. He had betrayed his father's trust, dishonored the family name. There was but one thing left.

Tiong Ham slunk through the dark back-streets, moving instinctively toward the river. As he crouched motionless beside the low parapet, the sullen rush of its waters throbbed through his head. He wondered dully why he did not jump. One quick motion and all would be over. Suddenly he realized that he wanted to bid goodbye to one of his few friends, an elderly widow, who had always been kind to him and with whom he fancied himself in love. He rose and made his way swiftly to her house. Despite the unconventional hour, she admitted Tiong Ham, realizing that something was gravely amiss. For a long time he refused to tell her, then shakily blurted out the truth. Without a word of reproach, she turned to a heavy teakwood chest which stood in a corner of the room, unlocked it and lifted out a bag filled with gold coins. Deftly counting out ten thousand guilders, she poured them in another bag and handed them to Tiong Ham. "Take these and give them to your father," was all she said. Stilling both his protests and his incoherent efforts to thank her, she shoved him abruptly out of the door. Tiong Ham never forgot the widow's kindness. Not only was the debt swiftly repaid, but during her long lifetime she lived luxuriously on his bounty. Tiong Ham gratified her slightest whim and she was the only person permitted to enter his private office without being announced. No matter how busy, Tiong Ham put aside his affairs to listen patiently to the chatter of his garrulous old friend.

Tiong Ham was not one to remain humble long. He was soon plunged into further conflict with his father, whose narrow, old Chinese business methods made him chafe with

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impatience. Increasing friction seemed unavoidable unless Tiong Ham launched out on his own. This he was fully prepared to do. For some years an eccentric old German bachelor who leased one of Tjie Sien's properties had been on terms of great intimacy with Tiong Ham. He was so convinced of the twenty-year-old boy's ability and intelligence that he determined to take him as a partner. He entrusted three hundred thousand guilders, a sizable fortune, to Tiong Ham, whose sole investment in the partnership was his youth, cleverness and a consuming desire to make a great deal of money.

With this impressive sum at his command Tiong Ham decided shrewdly to invest in some commodity with a universal sales appeal. Sugar was a staple which every human needed. Sugar cane had been planted for centuries in Java, but there were comparatively few refineries as the natives preferred to eat the cane raw, as a sweetmeat. Curiously enough, the old-fashioned ones which existed were owned mostly by Chinese. This fact did much to influence Tiong Ham's decision to make sugar his career. He brought foreign scientists to Java to find the land best adapted for growing sugar and then, after purchasing several properties, he built refineries, equipping them with the most up-to-date machinery imported from England and Germany.

Tiong Ham's luck was phenomenal and no sooner were the first sugar plantations running smoothly than sugar started to boom. It was at this opportune time that I, quite wisely, decided to be born. As it happened, my parents were on one of their trips to China, so I saw my first sunrise in the Missionary Quarter of Amoy where my father owned a pleasant house. That evening, as my father paced to and fro in his garden, waiting impatiently for my arrival, a dazzling meteor flashed across the heavens. This was a good omen and

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because of it Tiong Ham, though he already had a daughter, was not overly disappointed at my being a girl. Later, but only after my grandfather's permission had been obtained, I was named Hui-lan, Hui, meteor, after my lucky star, lan, heavenly orchid, the most exotic of flowers.

(2.)

Living and Dying

The first thing in life I can remember is my grandfather's house. It was immense and gloomy, built in Chinese style with a series of separate pavilions linked together with what seemed like interminable miles of corridors. The corridors were lined with fat-bellied earthenware vats filled with rice and tobacco, a rather obvious sign of prosperity, which delighted old Tjie Sien, for he had never forgotten his lean days. The tobacco smelled pleasantly and was the special pride of my grandmother, whose only vice was chewing a plug made of the finest, most expensive leaves. My grandmother, her unmarried daughters and a few old and non-descript female relations lived in their own pavilion. The

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elderly ladies seldom left the house and sat most of the day playing chess together, my grandmother chewing her tobacco vigorously, her relatives sucking noisily on their water pipes, fascinating glass affairs filled with water and with long, sinuous stems through which water, air and a tiny dab of burning tobacco were mysteriously mixed. My grandfather's quarters were far away at the opposite end of the house. Underneath his rooms was his office, where in his old age he still carried on such business as had not been turned over to my father. The office consisted of one enormous room, always kept shaded and cool. It seemed to be overcrowded with Chinese clerks, neat as pins and crisply smart in their white starched jackets. As I passed the door I could hear the soft click-click of the abacus; Tjie Sien would not countenance such modern innovations as adding machines or typewriters.

Upstairs my grandfather lived in solitary grandeur. His bedroom was carpeted with matting so delicately woven that it looked like silk. He slept in a magnificent four-poster bed made of teak wood and carved with awesome dragons, birds and strange symbolical beasts. Piles of books were stacked up to the high ceiling and he would permit no one to touch them. In his large dim sitting room he too would sit playing chess through the day and far into the night with one of his favored cronies. He allowed only men to wait on him as he had the keenest antipathy for maid-servants. His dignity was so great that his two sons were never permitted to sit down when he talked with them, and I can remember my father, during the course of a tediously long conversation, shifting unhappily from one foot to another. He seldom ate with his family, but whenever he asked my grandmother or any of their children to dinner the invitation was grandly announced days in advance and the meal was made a great

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occasion. Now and then I was included at one of these solemn functions, and in a rare, unbending mood my grandfather would feed me with his own chopsticks. My manners were still in a rudimentary stage and if he tendered me a bean curd, an uninteresting but nourishing tidbit, I promptly spat it on the floor, but when he popped a morsel of meat in my mouth I chewed it nicely yet with obvious gusto. This would cause him to shake his head disapprovingly and prophesy that I must marry a rich man, for girls who would not eat bean curd would have to marry a rich man—or starve.

At each of these dinners he would deliver a brief lecture on economy—the only one I remember distinctly was when he warned me solemnly to save even the smallest scraps of soap, for, he reasoned, if I saved a hundred of these scraps which were too often thrown away, I would have a large cake which could keep a whole family clean for at least a month!

To balance these lectures he inaugurated a pleasant custom which Mr. John D. Rockefeller must have copied, for every morning he gave each grandchild a nice shiny coin, the equivalent of a dime.

Tjie Sien was intensely conservative. He would not countenance any of his family in foreign clothes, and he took extravagant pride in his queue. He was growing a trifle bald, and no famous beauty could have tended her hair more meticulously. Each morning it was brushed out with gentle strokes, so that not a single hair would be rudely dislodged, and then re-braided with strands of black silk to make his queue plumper and more glossy. Grandfather's only European weaknesses were cognac and petit beurre biscuits. He downed a bottle a day in his stride and kept a large jar of the biscuits beside his bed. I dipped into them whenever I could and he never scolded me, for I think he hated to admit,

Living and Dying

even to himself, that he indulged in food made by what he termed "barbarous foreigners!"

Holidays were great events. Tjie Sien celebrated each one with old-fashioned pomp, and no single detail of the elaborate ceremonies was slighted. I liked New Year's best. It was the gayest festival and we were all given very fine new dresses and silver coins wrapped in scarlet paper for luck. All of the grandchildren, down to the tiniest baby, were awakened before midnight, dressed in their new robes and then marched into the reception room where my grandparents sat side by side, stiff and immobile on red lacquer "thrones." Two by two, strictly according to seniority, we filed up to the thrones, knelt on a small silk pillow, solemnly kow-towed three times and murmured politely "Ying Tang." "Ying Tang" meant "I ought" and was equivalent to a promise of obedience for the following year. The direct descendants, children and grandchildren, masculine preceding feminine, paid their respects first, and we were followed by daughters-in-law, aunts, cousins and finally the household servants. It was annoying to have all my little boy-cousins march in front of me, as even then I valued my own importance, but on the whole I considered this particular ceremony great fun, and when I made the kow-tow I smacked my small forehead on the floor ostentatiously with a resounding thump!

For New Year's each member of the family was given new robes by my grandfather, who chose the colors and embroideries himself and then had them made up in China. These dresses were a source of great satisfaction to me and I shall never forget my favorite—a pale blue China silk embroidered with delicate pink flowers and golden leaves.

During the New Year's festival, which lasted five or six days, my grandparents' gloomy house was temporarily brightened by "good luck" inscriptions painted on warm red

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paper. The inscriptions were usually banal enough, but there was one which especially fascinated me. It turned up every year and read "Ten thousand generations and long duration." In my mind's eye I would try to visualize ten thousand generations of Oeis ranged in a row, and wondered if they would stretch from Semarang to China. On the night before New Year's spirits were said to be about, listening to everything one said. To insure a family's prosperity and health for the coming year it was vital that everyone avoid offending them. Naughty children were warned not to use such ill-omened words as "death," "coffin," "snake" or "demon." Parents who had especially mischievous children took stern measures to protect them against their own evil-doing by scrubbing their lips with paper money. By this simple precaution any untimely remark was automatically transformed into a promise of good fortune!

Separated from the house by a series of courtyards were my grandfather's stables. They were kept spotless by a squad of native grooms who had little to do but cater to a score of handsome but remarkably obese horses. The stables were a source of constant irritation to my father, for Tjie Sien refused point-blank ever to let his sons ride or drive, his reason being that it was more suitable for young men to go afoot. My grandmother seldom left the house, and the horses were harnessed only when my aunts went calling or Tjie Sien drove out into the country. Day after day the horses remained lazily in their stalls. Tjie Sien, usually so careful of every penny, let them eat their heads off without complaining of the cost. This gesture was his sole extravagance.

My grandfather started to build his tomb at least twenty-five years before he died. Though he was still a comparatively young man, it became his most engrossing occupation, and before the tomb was completed to his elaborate specifica-

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tions it had cost him many thousands of dollars. His natural instinct had been to be buried in the family village back of Amoy, but his years as a T'ai'ping revolutionist had been a bitter experience, for he had seen tombs ripped open and bodies desecrated. A magnificent mausoleum such as he planned would prove a magnet to Manchu soldiers should another revolt sweep over China. Grandfather, like all religious Chinese, had the greatest horror of having his body mutilated either before or after death. The Chinese believe in a close connection between body and soul, and if the body is maimed the soul will be denied admission into Heaven.

So Tjie Sien wisely decided to be buried in peaceful Java, where he had raised his family and waxed prosperous. After this momentous decision had been made, he searched for many months to find a lucky spot for his tomb. Astrologers had to be consulted, and all important omens were given due consideration. For instance, it is considered unlucky to be buried on flat land, while a mountainside that faces south is ideal. A stream adds to luck, but trees, cypresses and pines especially, are even more to be desired for they attract the vital essences of Yang and Yin, the male and female spirits, which protect bodies against decay and the attack of evil spirits. Following the astrologer's advice, my grandfather purchased several hundred acres of virgin forest not far outside Semarang. The tall trees clustered about a sizable hill, which was chosen as the site for the mausoleum. Tjie Sien's first efforts were bent on creating an impressive approach to the hill. Hundreds of native coolies were hired to build the road, and it often suited my grandfather's fancy to dress in laborers' clothes, and work with them, chopping, hewing and uprooting.

The next step was to prepare the hill, a painstaking process, for the mausoleum was to be built on its summit. All but

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the most graceful trees were chopped down, the underbrush cut away and the soil levelled into a succession of terraces, each one planted with the smoothest turf and watered by small, artificial streams which trickled slowly from one level to another. Leading up through this maze of flowers was a broad avenue of steps, each a heavy slab of granite brought from China at the greatest inconvenience and expense. Topping the hill was the tomb, built of Chinese stones elaborately carved with symbolical figures. It was really quite as impressive and magnificent as my grandfather had desired. In the graveyard surrounding the mausoleum Tjie Sien had assigned a special place to every member of the family excepting the daughters, who, of course, were supposed to be buried with their husbands. Burial in a Chinese family graveyard is as sternly regulated as is the seating of a state dinner party. Different parts of the graveyard are considered more desirable than others, and married couples whose children are to carry on the family tree are given the most honorable places, either front, back or in the center. Unmarried sons or daughters and children who have died in infancy are buried either on the right or left sides.

It took a great many years to accomplish all this work, and when everything was completed Tjie Sien's spirits drooped noticeably. Working about his tomb had paradoxically enough kept him cheerful and in the best of spirits. So after a short respite he continued to improve the property, and eventually built a country house not far away from the tomb. Here he installed a series of shallow pools, where he cultivated lotus plants. Tjie Sien imported every imaginable variety from China, cross-breeding them was an all-absorbing hobby. The new house and its water gardens became his favorite spot, and as he grew older he stayed there for weeks at a time, seldom bothering to return to Semarang.

Living and Dying

One day my grandmother became ill. She had never been sick before and even now there seemed to be little the matter with her. She stayed in bed, propped up with pillows, her eyelids closed. For months she lay there calmly, almost motionless, as her strength dwindled away. Finally, it was apparent that she must die. Her feet had begun to grow chill, she could not talk, yet now and again with a tremendous effort she lifted worried eyes to her husband. Tjie Sien sat quietly beside his wife, the woman whom he had married without ever having seen, this tired woman who had so completely and satisfactorily filled his life. He did not caress her or show any outward affection; for such is not the Chinese way. He talked to her about death reassuringly, for the Chinese dead remain ever near the living, not imprisoned in some coldly golden, faraway heaven, and their going is but a gentle sorrow.

"Why don't you depart?" he urged softly, for he realized that her troubled mind delayed her passing. "Is there anything on your mind? Is there something you want me to promise?" Her eyelids moved in faint affirmation, and he sensed the unanswered question. Tjie Sien knelt beside her, looked steadily into her eyes. "I promise to join you as soon as our youngest daughter is married and settled in life." He paused, then whispered so low that their sons and daughters, gathered around the bed, could barely hear: "Is that what you want me to promise you? Will you depart happy and satisfied?" Grandmother nodded and a smile, like the flickering of a hand between sunshine and shadow, passed over her face.

After my grandmother's death my grandfather, true to his promise, anxiously watched over his daughter, Tjiem Nio. My aunt was his sole concern; as the years passed by, he paid small attention to business and lived at his country

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place to be close to his wife's grave. At nineteen Tjiem Nio was suitably married, and when she was confined with her first child Tjie Sien decided it was time to join his wife. He remained in bed for several weeks before he died. My father and all the family, knowing this, seldom left his side. He seemed to believe his wife was already with him. "Tiong Ham, open the door for your mother!" he would say to his son, "don't you hear her steps?" Tiong Ham then obediently opened the door and shut it again just as if a living person had entered. My grandfather, whose mind was otherwise remarkably clear and lucid, carried on long conversations with his wife, asking her not to be impatient, as he would join her when everything was in order. My grandmother seemed to be more demanding in death than she had been in life, and Tjie Sien had to reassure her repeatedly that he would be with her soon. After he had straightened out his affairs to his satisfaction, he called his sons and business managers to his side and in his usual decisive manner gave them final instructions. My mother had to promise to be a faithful wife and to bring up her children true to their mother country. My father was to take over the upkeep of the ancestral home in China, and was charged with the support of all the needy relations. As a final paternal gesture, Tjie Sien created a fund for the destitute members of his family and for those who were too poor to pay for adequate medical attention. Thus having put his house in order, he had himself dressed in a costly silk robe, and with folded hands sat upright in bed waiting for death. In an effort to prolong his life a piece of strengthening, aromatic ginseng root was placed in his mouth. Tjie Sien calmly took the root from between his lips and said in a strong, steady voice: "This is no use. Your mother has come for me and I must go." Quite peacefully, without regret or struggle, Tjie Sien closed his eyes.

(3.)

Jungle Tours

When I was a tiny girl my family journeyed to China and Singapore each year. Home in Java, my mother, who had grown exceedingly restless, traveled incessantly about the island. But I was left safe in the care of the sweet nuns who ruled over the prim Franciscan convents which flourished in Semarang and Surabaya. These convents were filled with little Chinese girls, daughters of Java's wealthiest merchants. Some were Christians, others, like myself, Buddhists. From time to time I went home, where I thoroughly enjoyed being petted and made much of, and where I played with my sister who was four years older than I. When nearly five I finally left the convent. My father had

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built a new house in the European quarter of Semarang; but just as I was beginning to enjoy the luxurious liberty of family life Mama decided at last to take a direct hand in my upbringing and carried me away with her on a succession of seemingly endless excursions.

Mama's ideas of spending money were lavish in the extreme. We journeyed with the pomp of Javanese royalty, in small leather-topped carriages which looked much like four-poster beds on high, rather rickety wheels. We were drawn by six to eight tiny ponies, and because they were freshly relayed every few hours, we swayed along at a dizzy pace. The ponies' small hooves kicked up a mist of white dust. I shall never forget the sharp, incessant cracking of the coachman's long whip, urging the ponies to even greater bursts of speed. Half the time I lay inert, almost stupefied with the heat, and much of the time I felt miserably sick from the strange foods I gorged at roadside waits. Mama never seemed to notice what I ate nor to bother about finding me a suitable diet.

I loved it when we came to a river, for then I could leave the stifling carriage which was eased onto an outlandish raft, and dabble my feet in the water. The rafts were made of giant bamboo poles lashed together. In the center jutted a tiny hut, a cool, dark refuge against the blinding sun. The raftsmen always greeted us with the most elaborate preparations. Pitchers of cold syrups and coconut juice were served us, and a troupe of the local dancing girls entertained Mama as we poled slowly across the river. The crossings often took hours, and I would sit drowsily, hypnotized by the rhythmic movements of the raftsmen as they sank their poles into the rushing, chocolate-brown waters, their turbans and sarongs splashing brilliant color against the rich jungle foliage. The dancing girls, faces ablur with

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bright yellow chalk, hardly moved as they twisted their arms in cunning sinuousness, occasionally stamping their feet, ever so lightly, to accent the tempo of the discordant *gamelan*. The *gamelan*, Javanese equivalent of the xylophone, thumped on insistently and the ponies rattled their bits, half-frightened, and eager to reach the security of the other shore.

We journeyed on and on endlessly through the lovely Javanese countryside, skirting the rice *sawahs* vividly green with spiky young plants. The shallow pools were ruffled with the seeking snouts of goldfish, which the thrifty Javanese breed while the land lies fallow. Other rice fields were being ploughed under by water-buffaloes lunging knee-deep in mud, their masters jack-knived over clumsy wooden ploughs and wooing them to work with a ceaseless, soothing song. Often we left the carriage to climb higher, each of us in a bamboo chair slung between poles balanced across the shoulders of native coolies.

We slept through the cool nights in primitive hotels, or when the country was especially wild, camped out in huts which had been specially prepared for us. During the hot hours our caravanseraï would wait while I dipped my small body in one of the frequent secluded pools, which were neatly dammed up by the natives as part of their elaborate irrigation system. I remember one early morning being allowed to bathe in the placid waters of an extinct volcano crater. Once we detoured around the macabre Valley of Death, a deep cleft in the mountainside filled with poisonous gases which seeped up stealthily from volcanic depths. From our carriage we could watch the hot, sulphurous geysers spurt high in the air.

On the high Diyeng plateau we passed by fragrant tea plantations, and all around us the flowers were as exag-

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gerated as if some invisible microscope had been held before our eyes. Hedges blazed with roses large as saucers, giant begonias glowed in tangled thickets, and the sweet scent of tuberose was heavy in the air. In Java summer is perpetual and the flowers, innocent of dividing seasons, blossom together all the year round.

Occasionally Mama paid a visit to one of the native sultans. I dreaded these occasions, because invariably her arrival was the incentive for an interminable festival. The dances went on until dawn, and to my prejudiced eyes were monotonously unvaried. I could not understand why Mama never grew bored. I would sit in the crowded courtyard, jammed close to Mama. The heat, the tightly packed Javanese, the unearthly din of jarring *gamelans* turned these evenings into nightmares. Indelibly fixed in my memory is the bizarre, dramatic entrance made by one fat sultan and his court. He appeared, surrounded by a harem of entrancing sultanas; they were slim, delicately moulded, with exquisite batik sarongs bound tight to accentuate sharply pointed breasts, their glistening black hair pierced with jewelled pins and atremble with exotic flowers. The royal bodyguard crawled on each side of the procession, legs crossed underneath and arms folded as they hitched along in a curious, crablike motion. No ordinary person dared approach a sultan erect, and the crawling position, denoting abject respect, was a remnant of the times when these once powerful rulers literally trod on the necks of their subjects. As soon as the court was comfortably settled, the Javanese dancers, men and very young girls, started their fantastic, symbolical posturing. The girls' faces were painted a bright, harsh yellow, and as they moved their

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arms, bending the hands backwards so that their flexible fingers almost touched the wrists, the light from a thousand colored lanterns flung jewelled sparks on their tinselled costumes. After watching with half closed eyes, I finally fell into an uneasy sleep, my head pillowed uncomfortably on Mama's lap.

We would travel interminably before Mama came upon a place which fitted her whim of the moment, where she could lease a house for a month or six weeks before restlessly driving on to another, more desirable spot. We returned to Semarang from time to time and to our country house at Salatiga high in the mountains, but before long we would be off again on Mama's strange quest for happiness. During those long months when we were constantly together I began to nurse a grudge against Mama. Budding egotism made me imagine that my feelings were ignored completely. I was resentful at being slighted and, childlike, never realized that Mama's lack of sympathy was her subtle method of disciplining a willful daughter.

At last our journeyings came to an end. I was seven, and we were staying near Djokjakerta so that Mama, who loved temples and old ruins, could roam through Boroboedoer, the largest Buddhist temple in the world. Even to a small child Boroboedoer was fascinating. The hoary gray building, built over a thousand years ago, was decorated with four hundred statues of Buddha, each snug in a separate niche. Thousands of strange flowers, birds and animals were carved in almost every conceivable nook and cranny. The temple capped a low hill and nine stories of wide galleries spiralled to its summit. Here I could run about free to do what I wanted. But unfortunately, after a few days at Djokjakerta, I came down with typhoid fever. It was then that Papa appeared. I was so seriously ill that he abandoned all business

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for several months and never left my side until I was well enough to return to Semarang. During my long convalescence I first began to know and appreciate Papa. After our return home I felt as if we were conspirators. Papa went to any extremes in rescuing me from Mama's strictness. Whenever retribution threatened, I ran to him, sure of refuge. Our intimacy was established irrevocably and from this time on my father's house was my castle.

(4.)

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My father's house in the European quarter was Dutch Colonial in style and adapted to the torrid climate of Java's lowlands. A long entrance-drive wound through an ornamental garden filled with quaint rockeries, pergolas and other fanciful Chinese conceits. The house itself, dazzlingly silhouetted against a background of extravagant tropical trees, spread out regardless of space. Its single story, high-roofed with moss-gray tiles, was surrounded by a broad verandah. Inside, the huge, high-ceilinged rooms opened onto corridors made wide to coax any errant breeze. The rooms were kept mysteriously dim through the heat of the

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day, and the white marble floors, glistening frostily, created an illusion of coolness.

Behind the house was an informal garden shaded by tall trees whose leaves rustled in a soothing, almost imperceptible rhythm, even when the breeze was lacking. Beyond this shady spot stretched a miniature park with a plump little hill in its exact center. Stuck on top of its grassy slopes, like a candle on a cake, was a lone, exceedingly dignified tree.

The park had been laid out by a remarkable Chinese gardener whom my father had discovered on the neighboring island of Sumatra. It was a fascinating place for a small girl to play. There were exciting artificial caves, and rockeries dotted with dwarf shrubs. Canals threaded through the lawns and were spanned with steep camel-backed bridges, while pools, shallow as saucers, were crowded with goldfish that nibbled lazily at lotus roots. In the furthest corner was a zoo where my father kept his strange collection of pets: fuzzy bears no bigger than a good-sized dog, timid deer, tiny creatures that made affectionate companions once their confidence was gained, sluggish snakes imprisoned in dangerously fragile glass cages, stringy-necked cassowaries who scuttled to and fro awkwardly. A noisy assemblage of monkeys were housed apart; some of them were small beasts, but most of them were huge, tail-less gibbons captured in the Javanese jungles. These apes were nicknamed "Wah-Wah" by the native because their plaintive cry sounded like the sobbing of a lost child. The tamer "Wah-Wahs" were allowed on the lawn, chained to poles which they shinnied up and down in ecstasies of delight. The wilder ones were huddled grumpily together within their tremendous cage.

Snakes in Java are continually underfoot. They come all sizes and colors, and many of them are poisonous. Geese

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are their natural enemy, and a flock of them marched and countermarched over the lawns and through the gardens, hissing surlily at anyone who passed within a few yards. They frightened my mother and me and sometimes attacked us—but they did their job well and gobbled up snakes with lightning speed.

We had peacocks too, which spread their ornamental tails and preened prettily in the daytime. At night they doubled as watch-birds, and if anything disturbed them after dark they terrified the natives by their unearthly screams. The legend was, that when they came upon an intruder they pecked out his eyes.

Our park and our zoo became such an attraction in Semarang that the public was admitted once a week for a small entrance fee, which Mama turned over to her charities.

Father appreciated good living and enjoyed entertaining in the grand manner, so our house was run on a scale unusual even in Java, where wages were low and servants easily trained. The household was in charge of a Malay majordomo, who kept forty servants in order. Directly under him was a Malay butler and twelve serving boys. They waited expertly on the table with the greatest elegance and style. Instead of trousers they wore brilliant sarongs draped in graceful ripples across the hips, topped by high-collared, stiffly starched jackets. Perched on their heads were curious, hat-like turbans of starched batik. I can still hear their bare feet slap-slapping on the marble floor as they moved swiftly about the dining room.

Catering for my father was a difficult task, as he was an enormous eater. One night he would order Chinese food, the next a series of complicated French dishes. To satisfy his whims there were three kitchens running simultaneously. Chinese food was prepared in one, in another European,

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while the third was used almost entirely for the preparation of special delicacies which my father despatched in endless streams as presents to the Dutch officials. There were four head Chinese cooks and a Malay chef who had charge of the French cuisine. He was a magnificent artist who had made his reputation at the best Dutch restaurant in Batavia and had also formerly served as head chef to the Governor-General of the island. The three kitchens functioned as separate units; each cook had his own staff, did his own marketing and was responsible only to the major-domo, who checked his accounts once a week. The servants all lived in the kampong, a small village about half a mile away. Each servant had his own cottage and returned at night to his family. The cottages were primitive affairs made from sheets of woven bamboo strips called *bilik*. Windows were cut out with a sharp knife, floors were of trodden earth, and the furnishings so meager as to be almost nonexistent.

When the servants retreated to their village at night the house and grounds were guarded by four Negro watchmen. They were newly arrived from Africa and spoke only a smattering of Malay. My father picked the biggest and blackest he could find because they terrified the natives, who nicknamed them "Black Dutchmen." The "Black Dutchmen" took life easily, and through most of the night their resounding snores rose from the verandahs where they would ensconce themselves in the most comfortable chairs. Apparently the mere knowledge of their presence seemed to be sufficient to keep marauders away, for we were never robbed.

I was too young to realize the significance of my father's having built his house in the European instead of the Chinese quarter. He was out of sympathy with the narrow, conventional Chinese of Semarang and wanted to be entirely

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independent. Though it was impossible to break his racial ties, he adopted as many occidental ideas as possible both in his private life and in his business affairs. Oddly enough, he never succeeded in learning a word of Dutch, and mastered only a modest knowledge of English. Throughout the complicated maze of his business dealings he always employed an interpreter. Even in Java this was necessary, for it was below his dignity and the dignity of the Dutch officials with whom he came in contact to converse in Malay, a language which they both understood perfectly.

Papa was a handsome man, powerfully built and not over-tall. He had enormous shoulders and was inordinately proud of his muscles. He could lift fantastic weights with uncanny ease and took the most childish delight in challenging professional weight-lifters such as were to be found at every Chinese fair and circus. He was most meticulous about his person and took fully two hours of preparation before leaving for his office. His toilette was a fascinating ritual, and I seldom missed a minute of it. The first step was breakfast. In spite of the heat he started off with a few mangoes or papayas, followed by a bowl of steaming porridge and climaxed with six fried eggs and several slices of liver garnished with lavish curls of bacon, all washed down with bowls of tea. To compose his nerves after this exertion father smoked two fat black cigars. Then he would bathe, not reclining in the tub in lazy European fashion, but standing erect in a Chinese version of the shower bath. There was a small raised platform in the center of the bathroom on which he stood while servants doused him with pitchers of water, first scalding hot, then icy cold.

Next he tended to his hair. When I was very young my father still wore a queue. This fashion, which had been imported by the Manchus when they became rulers of China

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three hundred years ago, had its drawbacks. Not only did the hair have to be brushed and braided daily, but the front part of the head had to be smoothly shaved, which my father insisted was torture. He had loathed his queue, found it both incongruous and embarrassing, but was forced to keep it as long as Grandfather Tjie Sien was alive. Once Papa's hair was cut in European style he sprayed his head each morning with Pinaud's hair lotion, which to me was always deliciously fragrant. His hair brushed, he began to shave himself with a long treacherous-looking razor. A particular Javanese servant was entrusted with the specialized task of stropping. My father was helpless without him—when he travelled, whether to China, Europe or America, this same servant invariably accompanied him. Naturally the wily Javanese imposed upon him outrageously. Being an inveterate gambler, whenever he lost too much money he stayed home in the kampong, pretending to be sick and refused to budge from his hut until my father had paid up his debts.

After shaving, father sat comfortably in a long rattan chair while one servant manicured his nails and another gave him a pedicure. He was terribly vain about his feet. The final ablution was the cleaning of his teeth. This tremendously complicated rite took at least half an hour and required the most elaborate equipment. Set out in orderly fashion on a table were orange sticks, metal toothpicks, absorbent cotton, bottles of disinfectants and a magnifying mirror. Each tooth was given a rigorous inspection, then scraped, cleaned and finally polished. Father was never too hurried, never too ill to shorten this daily procedure, yet alas! in spite of his efforts, most of his teeth were gone by the time he was forty.

Though father's toilette consumed two full hours, it would

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only be seven o'clock when, dressed in an immaculate linen suit and fine white oxfords, he drove off to his office. In Java business starts early in the morning, and during noon heat everyone from the boss to the lowliest coolie enjoys a siesta.

Papa's two paramount interests were myself and his business career. It was a toss-up which occupied more of his time. Whenever he was mildly exasperated with me he used to say grimly, "My small daughter is harder to handle than a thousand men." In his hours of idleness I was his only close companion and tagged along with him like a puppy, holding tight to his trouser leg to keep up with his impatient stride. We were in league against Mama and found a sweet, guilty pleasure in being companions in crime. It amused him to disregard Mama's fine plans for my upbringing by letting me run wild and forbidding anyone but himself to punish me. He spoiled me outrageously with presents and flattered my ego by listening attentively to my childish chatter, solemnly agreeing with everything I said. When he left for the office in the morning my one idea was to get away and be alone by myself. Slippery as an eel, I streaked out of the house before my teeth were brushed, my hair combed or my clothes put on properly. I stayed out all day long, shinnying up trees, climbing along our tiled roofs like a monkey or romping with my pack of dogs. I had more than a dozen dogs; wire-haired terriers, kangaroo hounds from Australia and a collection of hideous mongrels, for we didn't bother about keeping the breeds pure. The dogs were supposed to be kept in kennels, but somehow they were always let out. As long as they were with me I was safe from capture, for Mama and my nurses were terrified of them. I kept away from the house all day long, drinking water from the garden tap when I was thirsty, eating fruit when I was hungry. I relished the fruit enormously because

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it was forbidden, Mama being quite justified in believing that too much raw fruit was bad for a small girl. But Java-
nese fruit was delicious; there was the crimson *ramboetan*, a miniature edition of the mangosteen, which the natives called the "Hairy One" because its exterior was covered with coarse, red hair; the *sawee*, a kind of sapodilla, the size of a duck's egg with a dark, dirty skin like an old potato but with flesh sweet, fragrant and so soft that it had to be eaten with a spoon. Then there were the papayas, breadfruit and jackfruit, rough, heavy fruits which grew in all the native kampongs and, most extraordinary of all, the *doerian* which had a pungent, offensive odor like garlic and bad onions. The doerian is shaped like a football and is so heavy that should it fall on a man it would kill him. Though its rind is tough and prickly the fruit has a heavenly, indescribable taste. When the doerian is in season its insistent smell lingers everywhere and the natives trot through the streets of Java with huge bunches of them hanging from their bamboo *pikoelans*, each clumsy fruit cradled in two leaves from the frond of the tough *niebongg* palm crossed and twisted together.

In the afternoon I stole back to the house and allowed myself to be washed, dressed and made presentable. Promptly every evening at half past five I drove to fetch Papa from his office. Often I had to wait a long time, but I could wander wherever I pleased in the huge office building and there were always scores of polite and obliging Chinese clerks to entertain me. Dinner was my only conventional meal, and I always sat as close as possible to Papa while the platoon of turbaned serving boys waited on us. When I was still very tiny the dining room stools were much too low, the table too high, so I evolved a game which amused Papa mightily but must have been exceedingly annoying

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to our suave butler. First, an extra pillow was put under me; then after this boost my plate would be too low for comfort, so I would have another dish slipped under the one I was eating from. This process of adding first cushions, then plates, was continued until I could barely squeeze my legs under the table, and the plates were stacked a dozen high. Finally the household became so resigned to my goings-on that stacks of plates would be laid out in advance on the sideboard, and cushions were accumulated within convenient reach.

Mama could never make any headway in disciplining me, because Papa invariably interfered and let me have my own way. Mama had very definite ideas of how she wanted me brought up, but I evinced the greatest ingenuity in disobeying. If Mama forbade me to eat fruit I would eat nothing else; if she refused me more than a few pieces of candy each day or tried to keep Papa from giving me absurdly extravagant presents, I deliberately coaxed candy from him and gifts which I neither wanted nor liked. Then when my over-taxed stomach rebelled from being abused I refused to take medicine from anyone except Papa. If he happened to be away on business in some other city or at one of his plantations he had to drop everything and come home immediately. For a while Mama believed that raw eggs contained all sorts of health-giving properties, so every morning she made me hold my mouth wide open and then would break an egg into it. I soon developed a technique for gulping down the egg whole, and the minute her back was turned, sticking a finger down my throat and throwing it up. When I really lost my temper I wreaked a terrible but highly picturesque revenge. Tearing off my clothes, I ran at top speed to the stables where I rolled in the mud, then scampered back to the house, stark naked and dripping with filth, to plunge

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into the middle of Mama's exquisitely be-ruffled counterpane. The first time this happened Mama grabbed me and locked me in her bathroom as punishment. But I gleefully started tossing all the bottles on the floor with a delightful smash. Mama, frightened that I might lie weltering in a pool of blood, opened the door, and I ducked out.

Mama was terrified of the monkeys in our zoo, and to frighten me away from them, told me many a hair-raising story. Her favorite was about the ape who watched his master shave each morning. One sad day he forgot to put his razors away and the inquisitive beast chanced upon them and, trying to imitate his master, started to shave the family's baby. The baby protested vigorously against this indignity, and the ape, unable to keep the squirming child still, sliced off his head with one swipe of the razor. This parable had quite the opposite effect from what Mama intended; it definitely raised the apes in my estimation and I began to look at them with new interest. So in the afternoon when Mama was safely taking her nap, I made a point of bringing them honey, bananas and peanuts.

The big "Wah-Wahs" became most friendly, and after a while I went nonchalantly into the cage where the most vicious apes were chained, to pet and feed them. I was not afraid of anything except beetles, but hobnobbing on intimate terms with a half dozen big gibbons was exceedingly dangerous. Their bite is supposed to be fatal, and they might easily have turned on me, because they loathed my sister, who teased and cruelly threw leeches on them. The "Wah-Wahs" had a horror of "blood suckers" and, not daring to pull them off, went almost crazy with fright. Somehow they realized I was a friend, and they sat pathetically sobbing while I yanked the disgusting creatures from their hairy bodies. One afternoon Mama, suspecting that

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I was up to some deviltry, trailed me to the monkey house. She spied me sitting comfortably in the monkey cage with my arm companionably around the neck of a sullen "Wah-Wah"—and, too terrified to speak, fled back to the house. As she was powerless to prevent me from playing with the monkeys Mama eventually persuaded Papa to give them away to a traveling circus. I was disconsolate for a long time.

My mother bothered little with her elaborate household. In Semarang she spent half the day in her bedroom before her mirrored dressing table or resting on her four-poster bed, of whose frothy lace spread and canopy she was immensely proud. She had a maid who did little else but brush and dress her long hair and another maid who took care of the severely simple dresses which my mother affected. On formal occasions she wore the old-fashioned pleated Chinese skirts and loose knee-length coats, but for every-day wear she dressed in a becoming Javanese costume sensibly adapted to the hot climate—a bright sarong and a tight fitting muslin coat called a *badjoes*.

The most picturesque member of my mother's personal entourage was her private masseuse, a wizened old Chinese woman, hopelessly addicted to opium. She would return in the early afternoon to her tumble-down hut in the kampong, and whenever I was able I would sneak after her. At first I felt deliciously wicked watching the old woman prepare her opium, and when finally she allowed me to "cook" the dark, treachy substance over a small lamp I felt very grown up. To cook opium properly requires considerable knack, and I was far from expert. A minute quantity of the precious drug is ladled out into a small dipper where it is stirred constantly until a sticky drop forms. The drop is then precariously balanced on the narrow handle of the dipper

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and held over a flame until roasted to just the right consistency. I would either burn the drop to cinders or else let it fall into the lamp. But the masseuse never minded, because she could always retrieve a few grains, and it gave her a fine excuse to smoke just a bit more than usual. Opium was so expensive that she savored every puff to its fullest extent and in an effort to be economical tried not to exhale. After half a dozen puffs she would collapse into a pitiful bag of bones. Her legs and arms would become rigid, her wrinkled skin contracted, her eyes glazed and sightless. I would stand and watch her as long as I dared, then, half choked with fumes, would run out breathlessly into the open.

The masseuse was bad enough, but her feeble old husband was worse. The old man was jobless, existed solely on his wife's earnings, and was in such disgrace that he was not allowed to live with his wife in the servants' kampong.

He slept in some nearby village, no one knew where, and occasionally would shuffle into her house, to sniff the opium smoke and snatch a puff or two from the old woman's pipe. Once she was in her trance, he would creep into her room, carefully scoop up any specks of opium dust that had fallen and make off with the filthy rags used for cleaning the pipe and tray. These he boiled, extracting opium from the water. One day I came upon him sitting miserably in front of his wife's hut, every muscle twitching and trembling as if he had the ague. I asked him what was the matter and he told me mournfully he had been without opium for days. Instantly sympathetic, I promised to bring him some on the morrow.

This was no idle boast, for in my father's office was a large cabinet crammed with samples of every imaginable kind of Javanese product. They had been collected to pique the interest of foreign business men who came to Papa seeking advice on local investments. There were joints of sugar cane

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tied together, strips of half-processed rubber, miniature sacks of coffee and, as a curiosity, several jars of opium. I came and went here as I pleased, so no one noticed when I casually pocketed a jar. I rushed with it back to the kampong, and presented it grandly to the old man, who stood speechless, his toothless mouth sagging open in sheer astonishment. He disappeared with his prize, and was unseen for a month. To judge from his emaciated state when he finally reappeared, he must have passed the intervening days in a blissful state of unconsciousness. I, of course, was entirely ignorant of the harm I had done.

I had my own bedroom. It was a luxurious room for a little girl, and I was tremendously proud of it. Pale blue was my favorite color and almost everything was blue, from the blue-white marble floors to the sky-blue linen sheets. The long windows were framed in blue muslin curtains tied back coquettishly with fat blue satin bows. Beside my small lacquered bed I insisted on having a fluffy blue bath-mat, to keep my feet from touching the cool marble. This foible amused Mama no end, because during the day I raced over the countryside barefoot, and my tough little feet were scratched, bruised and thoroughly inured to everything from razor-sharp rocks to slimy mud. Though I never looked in the glass, Mama, hoping to rouse some feeble spark of vanity, had installed a gigantic triple mirror on one wall. A feature of my room was a doll's house which reached almost to my chin. Any little girl would have delighted in this toy but I had always scorned my innumerable dolls, so turned it into my private bank. Papa had continued grandfather's custom of giving coins away, and every evening when he returned from business he filled my hands with whatever shiny money

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his pockets contained. I had no idea of their value but liked to play with the bright coins and found it convenient to stuff them into the doll's house. My bank was soon stacked to the roof and whenever I felt in an expansive mood I would invite one of my nurses or a favorite servant to take a handful.

I was fussy as an old maid about keeping my room tidy, and I allowed no one, not even Mama, to come in without being invited. If any of my luckless "guests" happened to sit on my bed I flew into a fury and insisted on having the bed-linen changed completely, from pillow slips to sheets. Papa understood my proprietary feelings and invariably flattered me by asking well in advance for permission to pay a call. When he came he had his own special arm chair, and not once did he commit the grave error of sitting on my bed.

Papa pretended to disapprove of every kind of superstition. But every now and then he weakened a bit, especially when the superstition had to do with my possible well-being. He insisted that a large bowl of rice, topped with a hard-boiled egg and a waxy red pepper, be kept under my bed as a decoy for any hungry evil spirits who might happen to be about. The rice would satisfy their appetites completely—and thus distract their attention from a tender morsel like me! I thought this rice bowl an enchanting idea, and sometimes when I happened to be hungry at night I would reach under my bed and eat a handful of rice and perhaps nibble the egg. The bowl was refilled each week, and it proved to be a most convenient way of having a midnight snack.

I loved to lie in bed and watch the tiny house lizards whisk across the ceilings or dart up the walls. They slept through the day, appearing promptly at sunset to stalk their insect prey. They were fascinating animals and in repose looked like miniature bronzes. The young ones were

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absurdly small but at full growth reached about four inches in length. The natives, adapting the sound of their whispery cry, called them tjik-tjaks. With a little patience they were easily tamed and I found one or two who actually seemed to recognize me. They laid white eggs hardly larger than an orange pit, which hatched conveniently all by themselves. I used to collect tjik-tjak eggs and keep them in match boxes. It was exciting to see them hatch and even more exciting to thrust the box suddenly under Mama's nose. While the delicate tjik-tjaks remained my special pets, the native servants liked a much larger lizard, the *tojek*, because it was considered lucky. Though a tojek is inclined to plumpness, he catches flies with amazing dexterity. His chief claim to fame is an eerie, reiterated cry which sounds like "Waak-aaaah." He repeats this call, starting vigorously and then running down like an alarm clock. Natives start counting the minute they hear him cry—"Satoe, doea, tiga, ampat, lima—" and if the tojek manages to achieve seven cries it is considered the greatest luck. But usually the sixth effort is too much for him, and his "waak-aaaah" peters out into a faint hiss.

I adored the fuss of preparation which swept over the whole house when my father gave an important dinner party. I made the most unmitigated nuisance of myself, hopping from one kitchen to another, prying into pots and pans, pinching off a morsel, scooping up a tidbit whenever a platter was left unguarded. The Chinese cooks and the Malay chef, too respectful to lose their tempers, pleaded with me to leave their kitchens in peace. The Malay butler, whose triangular face was usually wreathed in smiles, scowled if I sneaked into the dining room to watch him. For large dinners he set out four round tables, each seating ten, and covered them with a white cloth. Stools instead

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of chairs were ringed around the tables, and colorfully capped with silk cushions, they resembled toadstools huddling under a fat mushroom. The various platters of food were placed simultaneously in the center of the table. Floral decorations were never used, but my father's exquisite table appointments more than made up for the lack of color. The whole dinner was served on silver plates carved intricately with strange animals and legendary figures. Beside each plate were a small silver ladle about the size of a dessert spoon, a deep-bellied porcelain spoon, and ivory chopsticks, gold-knobbed and tipped, linked together with a fine gold chain. Each guest had his own twin pear-shaped silver dish for soya sauce and vinegar. Soup was eaten either with the silver ladle or the porcelain spoon, in case the metal became too hot. There were no knives, glasses or napkins on the table. A hot Chinese wine was drunk from a silver cup, tea from a larger silver bowl. Any knife, according to the old Chinese way of thinking, is a weapon and therefore considered poor taste to have on a dinner table. Neither napkins nor finger bowls were considered necessary, because in between each course footmen circle the tables with a pile of small towels which had been wrung out in steaming perfumed water. In this way hands were cleaned frequently and pleasantly.

In those days no woman ever attended social functions, they were strictly masculine affairs and Mama never even glimpsed her husband's guests. But I, full of curiosity at all times, would steal downstairs and peep through a door or window. I could see my father, resplendent in a Chinese robe instead of his inevitable white suit, ushering his friends toward the gargantuan feast. I did not realize that Chinese etiquette is the reverse of European procedure, and so I did not think it strange that the guest of honor should be seated

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opposite father, who, as host, took the "lowest" seat. Before everyone was settled on their stools Father served the rice wine punctiliously to his guest of honor, then to the other less important guests, while at the adjoining tables "hosts" had been appointed to carry out the same polite offices. The guests ceremoniously toasted father to thank him for the meal they were about to enjoy—and after these preliminaries the forty well-dressed, prosperous Chinese gentlemen turned to the serious business of eating. I knew that the meal they were about to demolish required a robust constitution, tremendous concentration and a strong head, for I had watched it being prepared in the kitchen. There were fourteen courses starting off with appetizers of Thousand Year Eggs, salted ducks' eggs, cold pigeons and quail and miniature pancakes stuffed with crabmeat and mushrooms, followed by a course of roast pheasant and spinach, and working up to a final crescendo of rice stewed with pork, salted vegetables, beef, pickles and salted fish. In between were such highlights as sharks' fins and lacquered duck. My father took great pride in urging his guests to eat the sharks' fins, for this was the most extravagant gesture a host could hope to make. An ounce of this delicacy cost five dollars even in Java, and its preparation required both skill and patience. The fins were soaked in tepid water for three days, doused in wine an hour before cooking and then lightly stewed in chicken broth. Only the crisp skin of the lacquered duck is eaten, and to achieve the exact consistency it is roasted over an open fire. Special carvers strip the skin from the flesh while the guests watch. When cut into thin strips, the skin is eaten with pancakes dipped in jam, with a dash of spring onions on the side.

Each course was washed down with cups of hot wine, and as the dinner progressed the guests grew increasingly mellow.

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Finally, to enliven the sheer monotony of eating, they would begin "finger playing," a simple uproarious guessing game whose main purpose is to induce effortless intoxication, as the loser has to gulp down a cup of wine. They would finger-play in pairs, chanting a rhyme as they flipped open their closed fists: two fingers, five fingers, each simultaneously shouting their guess of the grand total. He who guessed correctly won, he who guessed incorrectly drank the wine.

Three hours passed before the last dish was served, the final cup of wine poured. Usually less than half the company survived the ordeal, but those hardy individuals who did moved into another room, where, buoyed up by fruit and innumerable bowls of tea, they gambled until dawn. No matter how late the hour, Chinese courtesy still prevailed and the host invariably offered to pay his guests' losses.

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I had had two brothers and their death in infancy was a shattering blow to my parents. This tragedy was all the more profound since instead of drawing them closer together, it became the cause of growing embitterment. Papa, despite his outward modernism, was fundamentally old-fashioned and wanted sons to carry on both the family ancestor worship and the business enterprises which he had created. As Mama succeeded only in presenting him with two daughters, he resorted to concubines in order to fulfill his desire for heirs who would bear his name. In Papa's heyday the practice of concubinage, which has since been outlawed, was regarded with tolerance. He could see no wrong in wishing to per-

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petuate his family but naturally Mama was resentful and I sensed instinctively that much of her restlessness was due to jealousy.

Dogs and horses played a great part in Papa's life. He took the keenest interest in breeding horses and there were always at least fifty-odd in his stud, all imported from Australia. Every evening after I had fetched him from the office, we spent the last daylight hours together in the immense paddock watching the horses being put through their paces by the native grooms. Sometimes in the early mornings Papa and I rode bareback together. We roamed the countryside escorted by a pack of kangaroo hounds, huge beasts from Australia that looked like giant greyhounds and were incredibly stupid.

I often thought Papa considered my company the sort of companionship he would have enjoyed in a son. I was just the opposite of my shy and retiring elder sister, and as I grew up Papa insisted upon having me with him more and more.

Several times a year Papa took me with him on a tour of his sugar plantations. They were all in the interior of Java, some a few hours', others a half-day's train ride from Semarang. I looked forward eagerly to these journeys, not only because the sugar plantations were great fun but because Mama seldom accompanied us! I went alone with Papa and two or three of his secretaries, who petted and spoiled me. Free as air, I did whatever my fancy dictated and I had few inhibitions. Papa owned five large plantations and refineries. Each one covered thousands of acres and was a small world of its own. In addition to the Dutch overseers and the Chinese personnel, about ten thousand natives were employed on each property, and at harvest time native workmen were taken on by the thousand. To tend to the

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wants of all these people Papa's sugar company had built miniature towns completely equipped with modern hospitals and schools, as well as comfortable European-style living quarters for the Dutch and the higher class Chinese. Special kampongs were put up for the natives and both town and kampongs were connected with a network of roads. The company built canals, bridges, irrigation sluices and artificial ponds called *wadoeks*, in addition to private railroads which hauled the cane from field to refinery. Each plantation had its own refinery where the raw cane was pressed and the juice cooked in Ali Baba vats, and later the sacks of sugar were stacked in huge barns called *go-downs*. Needless to say each plantation represented a vast investment in land, machinery and wages.

Sugar culture in Java has had a stormy career, and Papa found it an exhilarating business to be in, though he managed to sidestep the constant guerrilla warfare in which European lessees, native owners and rival companies became embroiled. The disputes were all occasioned by the necessity for water, because sugar cane, unlike Java's other successful crops, cannot depend on natural rainfall, and the young plants have to be artificially watered by hand, a process which is known as *siramen*. The overseers used to order their workmen to steal out at night, and armed with *patjoels*, a heavy Javanese hoe, they would divert an irrigation stream, obtaining water for their own plants which rightfully belonged to the native farmers or perhaps to another plantation several miles away. This practice became so common that finally armed guards patrolled the specially vulnerable sluices, and often during the night engaged in actual battles.

Papa managed to steer clear of small wars by sheer intelligence—he never acquired a plantation unless he was absolutely sure that its water supply was adequate and he

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never minded spending money to retain the water he had by building wadoeks. He was also farsighted enough to retain the most brilliant lawyer in the Dutch East Indies, Baron van Heeckren, whose fees must have been stupendous, but who never lost Papa a case. The Baron, with his stout wife and two lovely daughters, occasionally joined us on inspection tours. Papa admired the young van Heeckren girls enormously and used to say wistfully that he wished some day I might grow up like them.

Though I did not realize it at the time, Papa's attitude to his overseers and their attitude towards him was quite remarkable. In those days Dutch laws discriminated harshly against the Chinese, who were accorded little more recognition than the natives, and on many Chinese-owned plantations the Dutch overseers were barely civil to their employers. Papa refused to tolerate a similar situation, he demanded respect from his subordinates, and if he was not given it they were dismissed, no matter how valuable they might be to his organization. He had another disadvantage to overcome in dealing with his Dutch managers: he spoke no foreign tongue except Malay, which, used as a common language, was considered beneath the dignity of both. Though an interpreter was always at his elbow, he insisted on direct contact with his men, and breaking the tabu, talked their language. As a result he was admired and held in affectionate regard.

I loved the sugar plantation best in harvest season. The cane pushed its withered gray-green head twenty feet into the air, its tough stalks set close together in an impenetrable forest. A hot breeze rustled through the stiff leaves raspingly, and in other fields where the tall cane was being cut, the stalks fell crackling under swift knife blows. Beside the fields a dwarf locomotive, trailing flat cars piled high with

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cane, chugged along the narrow-gauge track. On the dusty road water buffalo, their gray flanks caked with mud, pulled clumsy two-wheeled *grobaks* loaded with cane stalks which reached from the buffaloes' horns to sag on the ground behind the cart. I wandered about in the dark refineries, watching the giant machines and drinking glass after glass of cane juice piped boiling hot from the vats. In the go-downs the sugar smell made my mouth water, and I followed close behind the ancient Javanese watchman as he went from sack to sack, scraping off beads of sugar which had oozed through the rough burlap. I was allowed to stay up late and I would sit huddled close to Papa on the verandah of the manager's bungalow, listening to the evening wind soughing sibilantly through the cane, straining my ears to hear the wild night calls which now and again floated over the fields from the faraway jungle.

Before the Chinese revolution in 1911, when the Manchu dynasty still ruled in faraway northern Peking, the Chinese in Java were forced to live under the most trying conditions. The Manchus, themselves an alien race which had swept down from Manchuria to conquer China three hundred years ago, were verging on collapse at the end of the nineteenth century. Torn by gathering revolt at home and increasing pressure from the outside world, the Manchu rulers had neither time nor power to provide adequate protection for their subjects overseas. Since the Dutch permitted no consular representation and only the vaguest diplomatic oversight, a Chinese in Java was pretty much on his own.

My grandfather, like so many other Chinese, had to put up with these conditions and during most of his life was literally a man without a country. Though my father was

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born in Java he fared little better. He was a Dutch citizen—but with restrictions. The Dutch, who had ruled Java sternly and with only a few brief interruptions as long as the Manchu Emperors had sat on the Dragon Throne, kept the Chinese in a subordinate position. The Chinese were bracketed with the Javanese and had to conform not only to Dutch rule but to the laws of the local sultans. As the Chinese were denied legal equality with the Dutch and other Europeans, it was difficult for them to obtain any kind of justice in the courts. This inequality distorted legal interpretation, making it easy for officials to square themselves in opposing Chinese interests.

Papa realized these difficulties only too well and in his business dealings he was always the acme of tact and politeness. To be successful he needed the cooperation of Dutch officialdom and he was determined to obtain it even if he had to follow the most circuitous route. So, never obtruding his wealth, he wooed them subtly. Papa's method was simple: from the lowest to the highest, he kept them well fed. It was clever psychology, since the officials were badly paid and could not afford all the table luxuries which their robust Dutch appetites craved.

Keeping the officials fed was a task so complicated that it required a special organization. Papa assigned two coolies to each official household and these were constantly on the go between the markets, our kitchen and the official's kitchen. Early in the morning the coolies trotted straight from the market, their deep baskets, dangling on either end of a bamboo yoke, weighted down with fresh fruits and vegetables. Later they would return from our kitchens with poultry, crabs or lobsters, and noodles, all cooked to a delicious turn and sealed in covered dishes which kept them piping hot until they reached their destination. On festival days our Chinese

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cooks were kept busy baking cakes and pastries by the hundred, all for the pleasure of our official "family."

Papa kept bales of handsome batik sarongs stacked in his office, and when an important Dutchman came to call he was sure to be given one to take home to his wife. On New Year's and other special occasions Papa distributed them to the plump Dutch *mevrourws*, who because of the heat had adopted the comfortable native garment as their own. These gifts especially enhanced Papa's popularity, as good batik sarongs were expensive and cost around fifty guilders or twenty-five dollars each.

Papa really seemed to enjoy giving presents to the Dutch officials. I think it must have warmed him with a pleasurable sense of superiority. Although the cost must have been considerable, he believed it well worth while and chalked it off his books as advertising. What he definitely did not enjoy were the precautions necessary to keep from treading on the Dutch officials' toes. I remember that in the early evenings we would go driving together in one of his shiny carriages drawn by a pair of smart Australian horses. As we bowled along the streets of Semarang Papa never relaxed, but always kept a weather eye out for an official carriage. They were distinguishable because of their gold parasols, or *payongs*, the Javanese emblem of rank. No official, no matter how minor in rank, would ever dream of making a public appearance without this gaudy protection. The payong was held as rigidly as possible by a native footman who took the most obvious delight in his conspicuous position. The minute Papa spotted a golden parasol he ordered the coachman to check his swift horses to a walk. Papa knew that if he overtook an official in his resplendent carriage it would attract unfavorable attention to his wealth.

Fortunately for Papa, when automobiles came into

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fashion relations between the Dutch officials and the Chinese were greatly improved, for it was obviously impossible to ride in a car with a golden parasol held suspended over one's head. As a compromise the payongs were made up in miniature and fastened to the radiator cap.

Occasionally the Chinese were attacked by the husky Dutch school boys who swarmed through the streets after hours. The boys were arrogant young cubs who had things all their own way. They were particularly obstreperous during the recess hour, so that the Chinese wisely shunned the vicinity of schools whenever possible. One day as Papa happened to pass a school at recess time he was set upon by a band of young hooligans who jeered him and mocked him. No one had thought to inform them of the large subscriptions this benevolent Chinese had given their school. The ringleader was particularly obnoxious, but much as he wished to thrash him, Papa controlled his temper and as usual won out by a stratagem. Pulling out a bright silver coin, he approached the biggest boy and said to him quietly in Malay "If you want to earn this money, just beat up that boy over there—if you get more boys on your side I'll pay them too." His idea worked like a charm, and within a few seconds the boys were all fighting each other like wild tigers. After that when Papa walked by the school, the boys greeted him politely—and with puzzled respect.

Although through force of circumstance Papa had to give many gifts to keep his business running smoothly, he sternly forbade any member of his family to accept any kind of present. This ruling held for the entire household, the various relatives who lived with us from time to time, as well as the servants. My sister and I were not even allowed to keep candy, for Papa took no chances. Too many were envious of his success and a box of chocolates might easily

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contain poison. However, Papa made one exception to his rule—I could accept presents which had no real intrinsic value, such as animals for the zoo and exotic poultry for my chicken farm.

Those who wanted business favors from Papa often tried to get into my good graces. I was tempted with every imaginable kind of present and had some amazing experiences in “bribery.”

Once in Penang just as we were leaving for Singapore, a breathless servant rushed onto the dock carrying a heavy crimson bag which he thrust into my hands saying that it was a present from the richest man on the island. I untied the draw-string, peered inside and saw to my intense astonishment that it was filled with silver coins. Papa laughed as he handed it back to the servant and explained to me that he had just closed an important business deal and had given unusually good terms to the sender of the present.

Mama had a definite rôle to play in Papa’s business career. She had to make regular calls on the wives of the various officials, and they returned the courtesy, more out of curiosity to see our house than for the pleasure of our company. Before she went calling Mama always put on her most severe dress and was careful to take off all her jewelry. She had the most beautiful jewels—her mass of hair was held in place with gold pronged pins knobbed with diamonds, emeralds or rubies; each set of pins was complemented with a parure, earrings, rings and bracelets in matching stones—and it broke her heart not to be able to show off this magnificence to the Dutch *mevrouws*; but experience had taught her it was unwise to make a display of jewelry. For according to Chinese custom, politeness requires that an admired object be presented to the one admiring it. The Dutch ladies, unaware of the predicament in which they placed Mama, were

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inclined to an over-effusive praise of her lovely ornaments.

Mama often insisted upon taking me with her on her social rounds. I thoroughly hated these visits, sitting in stuffy rooms and drinking lukewarm syrupy drinks. But more than anything, I grew to dread being kissed by the ladies on whom we called. The day of open rebellion finally arrived. After an especially demonstrative mevrouw had pressed her face against mine, I whipped out my handkerchief right in her presence and scrubbed my face until it stung. My first performance was a success, everybody laughed, but after I had repeated this gesture on succeeding visits the Dutch ladies began to scowl. The last straw was when I presented my foot instead of my hand in being introduced to the wife of a high and exceedingly important official. After that, to my intense gratification I was left at home.

Personal contact is contrary to the code inbred in every Chinese, who from the youngest to the oldest is restrained and fastidious. A public show of affection, no matter how conventionally synthetic, is considered in the worst possible taste. Parents are seldom demonstrative to their children once they have outgrown baby clothes, and even Papa, who adored me, rarely kissed me. When he did, he understood my feelings so well that he made it a kind of rite, and first washed his face and hands, then sprinkled them with eau-de-cologne before touching me.

Mr. Sijthof, the Dutch Resident of Semarang, was the only Dutch official who really became an intimate friend. He was genuinely fond of Papa and did away with all the formalities which usually existed between Dutch officials and the Chinese. Papa could call on him casually without having to make an appointment, and their congenial relationship allowed business problems to be discussed freely and sincerely.

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As the representative of Queen Wilhelmina, Mr. Sijthof lived in great style at the Residence, a large house of the same handsome Colonial architecture as our own, with what seemed to me acres of marble floors and a verandah flanked with impressive Corinthian pillars. A widower, he had brought his mother and widowed sister out from Holland to keep house for him. These pleasant ladies were on the most friendly terms with Mama, who was doubly enchanted with them because she knew they would not openly admire her jewels when she went to call. The Sijthof ladies raised pug-dogs, small, gray and with half corkscrew tails. I thought these absurd little dogs quite fascinating and I never could decide which I admired most, the pug-dogs or Mr. Sijthof's striking, curly gray beard.

In Semarang, and in fact all over Java, the outstanding wealth was in Chinese hands. The remainder was concentrated mostly in a few Dutch families and the Javanese princes, who were assured incomes by the Dutch Government sufficiently fabulous to maintain their courts in true Oriental splendor. There was one rich Arab family which cut a great swathe among the natives, for the Javanese are Mohammedans and they revered any Arab, no matter how humble, as a direct descendant of the Prophet. The commercial world was controlled by a handful of British firms, and one of these, which traded in sugar, was Papa's most powerful rival. As I grew older and continued to accompany Papa on his expeditions through Java I began to appreciate his business genius. He was always alert for new ventures in which to invest his money and he had a remarkable flair for choosing brilliant up-and-coming associates. He believed in "hunches" and played them for all they were worth. He stressed luck

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and often told me that if he were given the choice between a dozen intelligent men and one lucky man he would take the lucky one every time.

Papa's office was managed in the most modern manner and in his foreign department he kept a supplementary staff of Chinese clerks who had been educated abroad. As the scope of Papa's interests broadened he started his own private bank, the "Bankhuereeniging," to handle his complicated transactions. His next step was to plunge into shipping in order that his sugar might be shipped in his own hulls to Manila and China. Papa's first steamers were small freighters, but just on the eve of our first trip to Europe he purchased a ship of which he was especially proud. He was in Singapore at the time and we were to meet him there as passengers on its maiden voyage. The ship was not in any way equipped for passengers and there was not even a steward on board. Mama and I shared the best cabin which was the size of a pocket handkerchief. It was the roughest crossing imaginable, just three days of misery, and we disembarked at Singapore a bedraggled, queasy pair. Papa was on the dock to meet us, smiling proudly. When I saw his happy face I lost my temper completely. In an angry tirade I told him just how loathsomely uncomfortable his ship had been. He listened in amazement, then answered firmly, "On your own ship you are king of the castle. Disregard the discomfort, forget the bad weather. When something is your own you must believe it better than the best." It was our first difference of opinion, and neither of us would give in. Ever after, though Papa bought larger and better ships, I always refused to set foot on them.

Because of my father's important position in Semarang, he was called upon to entertain the island's royal visitors. As far as I was concerned most of them were tiresome, ex-

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cept the King of Siam, who proved to be a highly diverting exception. Days before his arrival Semarang was thrown into a state of tremendous agitation. The main streets were decorated and strung with gaily colored lanterns, and giddy triumphal arches sprang up over night. Our preparations were staggering. Papa had the verandahs enlarged to accommodate all his guests, and he planned a dinner party so colossal that the extra tables spilled out of the dining room and down the wide corridor which bisected our house so neatly. Thousands of lanterns were scattered about the garden, the tall trees were wired with special lamps which flood-lit the lawns and rockeries. Beyond, in the park, a town of small tents had sprung up. Here lived the dancing girls which the King had brought with him from Siam, and a group of Javanese temple dancers for a command performance in His Majesty's honor.

Since in one's imagination Majesties are superior, strikingly handsome beings, the King of Siam was a disappointment to my girlish fancy. He was a small dark man with a flowing moustache, most prettily asparkle with jewels; he was surrounded by an unwieldy entourage of dancing girls and courtiers. Among them were a number of ladies whose exact rank seemed hard to determine. They were short, fat and had bobbed hair brushed smoothly back from their shiny faces. They chewed betel nuts rhythmically, never pausing in their quick tempo, and when they smiled I was enchanted to discover that both their teeth and the insides of their mouths were jet black. The Siamese ladies were oddly attired in brightly colored jackets and from the waist down wore what appeared to be voluminous green silk diapers. Their legs were quite bare, and all except those of the highest rank squatted on the floor. These grand ladies accepted chairs somewhat dubiously and sat upon them cross legged. After

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the gala dinner Papa entertained them with Japanese dancing girls and gigantic exhibitions of fireworks which I was allowed to sit up and watch.

Several years later Prince Valdemar of Denmark and his nephew, Prince George of Greece, came to visit us in Semarang. Prince Valdemar, whom I considered a kindly old man, though he could hardly have been fifty at the time, was related to almost every crowned head in Europe. He was a brother-in-law of King Edward VII of England, a brother of King Christian IX of Denmark and uncle of both the Czar Nicholas II of Russia and of King Constantine of Greece. Prince George, who married a Princess Bonaparte, is an uncle of the present King George II of Greece. The two royal gentlemen, accompanied by a large suite, journeyed from Singapore in a yacht. Papa put the suite up at a hotel, and the princes stayed with us. The royal visit lasted for three days, during which every minute was crammed with some sort of fête. They proved most appreciative guests. Prince Valdemar was obviously delighted with our dinners and with the elaborate entertainments which Papa arranged in his honor. But Prince George was my favorite and I never took my eyes from this blonde giant who shared my passion for tropical fruit. It fascinated me to keep tally of the number of mangosteens he demolished at a single meal.

The princes' visit was not all pleasure and they were accompanied by several business advisors who succeeded in negotiating with Papa a modest deal in copra. Copra, the dried coconut meat from which oil is derived, was one of his numerous side lines. There were hundreds of thousands of coconut palms growing on the huge plantations which Papa owned just outside of Singapore. They were a wonderful investment, he used to tell me, for all you had to do was to plant the trees and then leave them alone until they matured, when they could be sold for a dollar apiece, all pure profit.

(6.)

Gods and Ghosts

The thread of religion was woven firmly into the pattern of my life. I accepted it with little question and quite without fervor; it was as natural as breathing and eating. I was taken to the temples on festivals, did without meat on the first and fifteenth of each month and paid the accepted honors to our Ancestral Tablets. My father, who had been brought up in a sternly religious manner, rebelled against too much piety, but in my grandparents' house where the ancestral tablets were kept the atmosphere was oppressively religious. The ancestral altar stood in the biggest room and was merely a long-legged, handsomely carved table which on ceremonial occasions was decked in embroidered coverings. Set on a wooden pedestal, the tablets themselves were

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simple strips of sandalwood hardly more than eighteen inches high. The names of the deceased and the dates of their births and deaths were carved on them in gilded characters. Beside each name was a curious red dot, placed there during the funeral ceremonies and made with the blood of a white cock. The tablets on altar shrines seldom include more than the third generation, and the distant relations have their names inscribed on a silken roll. My grandfather's altar differed from most because paintings of his parents were placed beside their tablets. Only direct descendants claim a share in ancestor worship. The eldest son inherits the tablets; younger sons must set up their own homes and have no tablets to worship. Daughters worship their father's ancestors only until marriage, then they turn their devotions to their new family. Whenever we entered our grandfather's house we knelt and kow-towed three times before the altar. This procedure was not entirely necessary but it pleased my grandfather, so we made a point of doing it.

It is difficult for occidentals to understand ancestor worship. The Chinese do not believe that the souls of the dead leave their bodies to dwell in some more happy world, but are taught that souls continue to hover near the earth and, as ghosts, keep in touch with their mortal surroundings. They retain all characteristics of their physical bodies, feel cold, hunger, even the need of affection and depend upon their descendants, for these ghostly necessities. Their wants are easily satisfied, the mere vapor from food appeases their hunger, and they only demand to be thanked as the founders and protectors of their homes. If these simple courtesies are ignored they become revengeful and withdrawing their protection, rob a family of prosperity and happiness. The original purpose of ancestor worship was to propitiate the anger

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of powerful ghosts, and perhaps subconsciously this accounts for the strict Chinese sense of devotion.

Though the Ancestral Tablets remained set up in Tjie Sien's house, there were a number of shrines and altars in ours too. Mama, like most Chinese women, worshipped Kwan Yin, the Goddess of Mercy and Fertility, while Tsao Wang, the Kitchen God, was revered by the whole household. Tsao Wang, as the inventor of fire, personified the hearth and had his shrine in each of the three kitchens. The shrines, tucked inconspicuously to one side of the long cement stoves, were shaky bamboo affairs brightened by a bit of red silk cloth and a gaudy paper picture of the God himself solemnly standing with a memorial tablet in his hand. His shrine, sometimes filled with soot and dust, often housed nasty cockroaches which the simple people nicknamed "Wang's Horses." Despite the cockroaches, Tsao Wang was very particular and women were forbidden to comb their hair, wash their hands, sharpen their knives, to even burn chicken feathers in sight of his shrine. At every new moon and every full moon joss sticks were burned before his shrine but the greatest to-do in the household was on New Year's eve, when Tsao Wang made his annual trip to Heaven. His picture was taken into the kitchen courtyard and burnt, but not before it had been dipped in wine to make him just a little drunk and thoroughly good humored when he reported the household's morals before the Pearly Throne of the Jade Emperor of Heaven. To appease Tsao Wang further, straw was thrown on the flames and tea was poured on the ground for his horse which was to carry him to Heaven. Firecrackers were set off to scare away any lurking devils, and as a parting touch of realism peas and beans were thrown on the roof to simulate the sound of horses' hoofs.

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Strange things happen in Java, events so astonishing that they seem unbelievable in retrospect, especially when one is far away from that fantastic island. The supernatural is taken very much for granted and it is easy to believe that *hantoes* lurk everywhere, in trees, animals, houses. A native's life is half spent in placating these uneasy spirits or else rousing them to plague his enemies. The *doekoens*, or witch doctors, grow sleek and prosperous through their lively trade in strange herbs and potions, by coaxing ghosts and casting spells.

The natives' firm belief in magic is contagious and I loved to sit hour after hour, listening wide-eyed to the stories my Javanese nurse wove as endlessly as a spider spins her web. I was a skeptical child, and though I was not convinced that all I heard was true, certain curious occurrences in our house made me hold both witch doctors and magic in the most wholesome respect.

Our most striking case of black magic had as its victim a pleasant enough native maid who came from a far part of Java to serve Mama. Her predecessor had left of her own accord and had been generously given a farewell bonus. Once away, however, she came to regret her decision. Perhaps it was mere jealousy of the new maid who had replaced her, but whatever the reason, she came to believe she had lost "face," a serious state of affairs which natives usually remedy as quickly and as unexpectedly as possible. The new maid soon fell seriously ill. The Dutch doctors found nothing wrong, and Mama, suspecting an attack of malarial fever, took her to a mountain resort. But she grew steadily worse. One day she announced that an evil spirit had bewitched her and that she would die if she did not return to her kampong. Just before her departure the maid came to bid Mama good-bye. Crossing the threshold she doubled up with pain. Other

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servants rushed to her assistance, and as she began retching handed her a basin. Suddenly needles began pouring from her mouth, landing in the bowl with a sharp "ping-ping." She remained in agony for a few minutes, continuing to throw up sharp pointed needles. After the retching ceased she calmly made her farewells and trotted off. Mama and my sister were flabbergasted by the scene but the Javanese servants merely shrugged their shoulders declaring that the needles had been conjured by the old maid in order to chase her successor away. By this singular success, she had regained "face."

When any of us were sick Papa was firm; no Chinese physicians, no native healers, only the best Dutch doctors were to be consulted. Yet in spite of Papa's modern attitude, Mama's one serious illness was cured by a Javanese doekoen after a series of expensive European specialists had failed. She became critically ill shortly after my sister's first baby was born, and the Dutch doctors could neither diagnose her case nor do much to ease her suffering. Her abdomen was terribly swollen and she was in such pain that a jarring footstep near her bed made her cry out in agony. Day after day she lay groaning feebly, her strength gradually ebbing away. Finally Mama's eldest sister became desperate. She knew of a doekoen who had cured countless illnesses simply by praying and she wheedled Papa into asking him to see Mama. The doekoen arrived in a shabby batik sarong and turban, a timid old man who looked strangely incongruous in Mama's frilly bedroom. He told Papa humbly that his reputation was greatly exaggerated but that he would do his best and hoped to be allowed to work a cure in his own fashion.

Frightened as I was about Mama I still had enough curiosity not to miss a thing the doekoen did. I had expected

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some fantastic ritual, and so his undramatic procedure seemed utterly senseless. First he asked Mama to face the wall and bare her back completely, then he knelt down near her bed. Lighting a long cigarette filled with pungent herbs instead of tobacco, he alternately mumbled prayers and blew clouds of smoke over her back. As he knelt, quietly smoking and praying, Mama's moans gradually grew fainter until they ceased entirely. The Dutch nurses, who watched superciliously, rushed to take her pulse for they thought Mama had died. To their astonishment they found that she had fallen into a profound sleep. The doekoen rose, tiptoed to the kitchen, and from harmless burnt rice brewed a sinister black liquid. This Mama drank when she woke after a day of peaceful sleep. In the evening the old man returned and repeated his treatment, smoking, praying and never so much as touching Mama's naked back. Slowly but surely she regained her health and in two weeks, though still very weak, was completely cured. Later the Dutch doctors pooh-poohed the doekoen, and attributed Mama's recovery to their treatment. Papa was far too tactful to tell them that their advice had been completely disregarded after the doekoen had started his miraculous cure.

The natives were firmly convinced that hantoes took possession of certain animals. And as they particularly feared snakes it was only natural to suppose that evil spirits sought refuge in their sinuous bodies. In almost every neighborhood there were snakes who became semi-legendary, who had definite names and whose habits were a source of terrified interest to the community. Young as I was, I never believed these tales. It seemed impossible that such snakes existed because no native would admit to having seen one. So when our Javanese gardeners and grooms began to tell me in scared whispers that an enormous snake came each night to sleep in the

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stable I paid little attention. As the weeks went by the stories about this snake began to fascinate me. They claimed that he was endowed with supernatural powers, and even the horses realized this for they remained quiet in their stalls when he appeared, instead of kicking and whinnying the way they did when an ordinary snake intruded. The more I heard the more determined I became to find out if he actually existed. The only way, I decided, was to set a trap for him. The native grooms were aghast at this idea—it would bring fearful luck to everyone. But the Chinese gardeners, who looked down their noses at the Javanese, built me a strong trap. They did a good job, figuring undoubtedly that it would annoy the native workmen if the snake were caught. The trap was duly baited with a dead chicken, which languished for several nights untouched. One morning I was wakened at dawn. I hurried to the stable to find that the snake had been trapped. There he was behind bars, unexpectedly enormous, more than twelve feet long with flashy markings on each side of his large flat head. The grooms in their gay sarongs and turbans were standing in a knot, murmuring and eyeing the snake uncertainly. One of them, more forward than the others, offered to charm him with a flute. Delighted at discovering an unexpected talent, I squatted beside my captive as the thin, reedy pipe rose trembling in a minor key. To my astonishment the snake reared up in the trap and remained stiff as a ramrod, staring at the Javanese stableboy.

I was anxious to keep my captive in our zoo but the native gardeners and grooms prayed me to let him go. They fell prone on their faces, begging for his freedom. To keep him imprisoned would surely bring dire misfortune on my father's house. At last I was forced to give way but I made them promise to take the snake far up into the mountains before they gave him his liberty.

(7.)

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I shall always remember my aunt Tjiem Nio's marriage. She had never been allowed to meet any young men and, with the exception of the lessons she had shared with my sister, her upbringing had been conventionally old-fashioned. It was my father's responsibility to choose a suitable husband for his sister. His method was simple. He found out which of his business associates had marriageable sons, and then rounded up a dozen of the most promising. After a scrupulous inquiry into their character and habits, he subjected them to a personal interview. Separating the wheat from the chaff, father emerged triumphantly with half a dozen candidates all of whom had his unqualified approval.

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He was much too modern to allow Tjiem Nio to marry a man sight unseen, and while he dared not outrage the conventions by letting her actually meet his candidates, he arranged what seemed to him as a fair compromise.

On an appointed day the suitors arrived en masse and were entertained by Papa on the verandah. Sweetmeats, iced drinks and cigars were served, and while the young men refreshed themselves and chatted, my aunt, concealed behind a Venetian blind, peeked at them through the window. Mama and my sister were hidden in similar vantage points, while I, although too young to be consulted, watched the entire proceedings with great excitement. The three women inspected each suitor carefully and then compared notes. They argued with considerable heat but their discussion got nowhere since none of them knew which candidate was which. One young man appealed especially to Mama but Tjiem Nio held out stubbornly for another. At last, after they had peeked through the blinds again and again, the most attractive suitor was singled out. He proved to be a certain Mr. The, and although he knew he had been personally selected by his bride-to-be, he never actually saw her until their wedding day.

The marriage of an Oei daughter differed from other Chinese weddings in two respects—my grandfather had never employed the services of a marriage broker and, instead of celebrating the wedding at the bridegroom's house, he had insisted that it take place in his own home. The marriage broker, usually an old woman of dubious character, was a necessity in the days when Chinese girls were kept in seclusion. Their position in the community was much respected, and their important duties consisted of bringing suitable parties together and arranging financial settlements between the parents. On the marriage day itself it was the broker's

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privilege to escort the bride in her red bridal carriage to the wedding ceremonies at the bridegroom's house. To earn her commission, the marriage broker was not above embroidering the truth, and the wiser mothers sent spies to check up the reports before the wedding contracts were signed.

Being wealthy and having such a fine house were the excuses Tjie Sien made for reversing the usual custom and celebrating his daughter's marriage at home. The truth was that grandfather enjoyed planning and fussing over any kind of festival. A wedding offered him more scope than anything except, perhaps, a handsome funeral. As soon as Tjiem Nio's marriage day was decided upon, Tjie Sien began selecting the ceremonial curtains and altar cloths for the wedding.

According to tradition these draperies were brilliant red, the marriage color, and embroidered with special designs featuring the Phoenix, a mythical bird which the Chinese believe to be the dragon's mate. The curtains were hung in the main windows, and the altar, where the Ancestral Tablets were worshipped, was duly decked in this new glory.

The next step was to arrange entertainment for the several hundred masculine relations and guests. This was no light undertaking, as they all expected to be handsomely fed and amused for several days previous to the wedding. Grandfather added a wide verandah on to the main part of the house, crowded it with stools and lined it with tables strong enough to hold the dazzling array of extravagant dishes which some fifty cooks had been hired to prepare. Out by the main gate were other tables and a portable kitchen. Any passerby, rich or poor, could satisfy his appetite at Tjie Sien's expense. On the lawn in front of the verandah a small carnival was set up. There were weight lifters, jugglers, prestidigitators, trained animals and a

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small theatre where Chinese actors declaimed endlessly, quite regardless of the surrounding hubbub. Grandfather had not forgotten to engage a *wayang*, one of the most popular Javanese diversions. The *wayang* is a marionette show. The puppets are flat, have movable arms, and their faces and limbs are grotesquely deformed in order, the Javanese explain, to evade the Mohammedan law which forbids the reproduction of the human body. They are made of buffalo hide, gaily painted, luxuriously dressed and are manipulated from behind a screen upon which the light of a lantern throws their shadow. The Javanese women follow the drama from in front of the screen, the men from behind. At Tjiem Nio's wedding the guests watched from the verandah, while the crowd which had collected on the street watched from the rear. As a finishing opulent touch Tjie Sien set off fireworks on three nights preceding the wedding. Rockets, sprays, fancy designs blazed into the sky and half of Semarang gathered to see them. At least three days before the wedding a professional beautician arrived to take care of the bride. To insure a perfect skin on her wedding day, her diet was carefully supervised. She was given a hearty purge and coaxed into drinking unpalatable potions brewed from medicinal herbs. While she was being ministered to in her quarters, my grandfather was delightedly rehearsing his sons, the best men and the bridegroom in the intricacies of the ceremonial steps which must be executed during the wedding ceremony. He also gave them the most painstaking instructions on how to walk so that the beautiful embroidery on their wedding robes might be shown off to the best advantage. There is much masculine coquetry about manipulating these heavy robes correctly, and it amused me no end to see my husky grandfather mincing along, swaying slightly from side to side to keep the embroidery from settling into folds.

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Tjiem Nio was up early on her wedding morning. There was a great deal to do. First her hair was shampooed, oiled and drawn smoothly into a knot at the back of her head. Stray hairs were plucked out to achieve the much admired straight line across the forehead. Then her face was powdered with a thick, chalk-white rice powder, her eyebrows blackened, and her cheeks and lips rouged ingeniously by wetting scarlet paper and dabbing on the dye.

Mama supervised dressing the bride, and though she had half a dozen willing assistants, it was more than an hour before everything was adjusted. Tjiem Nio pulled on Chinese stockings, knee-length and held up by elastic, before she slipped into embroidered slippers. Next came short trousers and a thin white jacket, lightly embroidered and looking much like a chemise. Over this foundation went long trousers, a pleated skirt and a wide-sleeved knee-length jacket of pale blue silk sprayed with elaborate red embroidery. This minor elegance was hidden by the wedding robe, a magnificent creation of scarlet satin thickly encrusted with gold embroidery and bordered with a design of dragon beads. Such a robe and insignia were supposed to be worn only by a Manchu Empress, but a Chinese bride on her wedding day is a queen in her own right and thus is allowed to wear royal trappings. Around the bride's throat was wound a white kerchief, and the long sleeves of her scarlet robe were cuffed with white silk handkerchiefs covering the tips of her fingers. Then the bride was given her wedding girdle, such as Manchu Empresses and brides alone are permitted to wear. Stiffened with bamboo, covered with satin and encrusted with semi-precious stones, it was purposely fashioned twice the size of the bride's waist and during the marriage ceremonies she had to hold it with both hands to keep it from falling. Tjiem Nio's final adornment was a headdress embellished with

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enamelled kingfisher feathers, topped with red pom-poms from which fell strands of pearls which covered her face completely. Though she herself could see through her veil of pearls, her features were almost completely concealed from the bridegroom, who saw her face for the first time in the bridal chamber after the headdress had been removed.

The bridegroom looked hardly less splendid in his glistening, plum-colored robe. His peaked mandarin hat, woven of lacquered straw fine as spun silk, was finished off with a jade button denoting his rank. To add to his impressiveness my uncle-to-be wore knee-high black satin boots with three-inch "platform" soles and when, flanked by two best men, he met the bride as she entered the room he towered above her in a virile manner.

The long hall where the wedding was to take place was gay with crimson hangings and crowded with guests dressed in their finest, most colorful robes. Before the bride's arrival the bridegroom, assisted by his two best men, executed the ceremonial steps to an accompaniment of Chinese wedding music. When the bride was brought to the door she was bowed into the room by the bridegroom, and then the simple Chinese marriage ceremony commenced. No priest officiated and they proceeded slowly, side by side, to the Ancestral Tablets at the family altar. The bridegroom kow-towed, but Tjiem Nio, kneeling humbly, barely managed a nod, her headdress was too heavy and she dared not let the bridal girdle fall. Next they worshipped Heaven and Earth, the bridegroom pouring wine on the floor and kow-towing reverently before a small altar burdened with bowls of fruit and plates piled high with sugar cane. The final rite followed after these obeisances had been properly fulfilled. Two porcelain bowls brimming over with a ceremonial tea made from the juice of Dragon's Eyes fruit were quaffed, and then the

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bridal couple turned to be congratulated by the guests. The men soon whisked the new husband away to feast and to pledge his health in numberless bowls of rice wine.

Tjiem Nio, trailed by her sisters, aunts, nieces and cousins, retired to the bridal chamber, where they helped her remove the clumsy marriage robes. I thought the bridal chamber was an enchanting sight, for suspended from the ceiling were scores of baskets, some overflowing with fresh flowers, others woven of pungent herbs. In the center of the room stood the bridal bed, a huge four-poster so large and so high off the ground that it had to be approached by an "entrance" and a short flight of stairs. The entrance resembled a small pavilion and was hung with silver gilt filigree globes filled with strips of sandalwood. Two seats backed with carved railings flanked the raised floor, between them a low table where tea was to be served to the bridegroom when he arrived from the wedding feast.

The bridegroom, feasting long and much too well, came to the bridal chamber quite drunk. And it is doubtful if he even glanced at the lovely decorations and Tjiem Nio's sweet face, which was now revealed to him for the first time.

Mama's family lived in the Chinese quarter of Semarang. A carefree, happy-go-lucky family they were and a strange contrast to my father's stiff, dignified parents. My grandfather Goei was a rotund little man who seemed to eat when he was not laughing and laugh when he was not eating. He had come from China as a cashier in a British firm which had opened a branch office in Semarang, and though he earned a good salary it was hardly sufficient to support in luxury his wife and too numerous descendants. My grandmother Wang was beautiful. Tall, still slim after bearing

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sixteen children, she had an aloof, unworldly quality that was rather frightening. Religion absorbed her completely and a continuous parade of Buddhist priests filed through the house. She had learned all the numberless Buddhist prayers, a rare feat which only a very few religious devotees ever attempted. Grandmother was a strict vegetarian and insisted upon eating her meals in solitude, but despite this foible she was too hospitable for her own good. The kitchen was busy all through the day serving food not only to the Goei children, their wives, husbands and grandchildren, but also to priests, friends, and in fact anyone who happened to call. She seemed utterly unaware of her beauty and her only vanity consisted in bathing and washing her hair in rain water which was especially caught for her in large earthen jars.

Mama was devoted to her family and at least once a week took me to visit them. I always inwardly enjoyed our arrival at the Goeis for we drove up in a handsome carriage loaded down with presents of food and fruit. My mother was greeted with enthusiasm as the wealthiest and most envied member of the family and immediately became the center of attention. I was able to bask in her limelight for a few minutes, and I fondly hoped that my cousins noticed my fine French dress and my stylish retinue of Chinese *amah* and Malay body-guard.

While my mother laughed and gossiped with a dozen or more of her relations I sat, primly conscious of my elegance, watching my young cousins. Occasionally they played a mild gambling game with mounds of dried fruit seeds as counters, but most of the time they simply sat and ate. They had a collection of toy pots and pans in which they actually cooked small quantities of rice and noodles over tiny braziers, and when they offered to let me taste these dishes I refused

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sourly. At four o'clock my three fat boy cousins returned from school, and they too promptly began to eat. Bowl after bowl of noodles and a whole ham disappeared down their greedy mouths in short order. Disregarding my obvious dislike for them they would cluster around me bragging about their strength and their adventures at school.

The relative for whom I had the most interest was my father's only brother, Oei Tiong Bing. He had the misfortune to be born an artist, and though he did his best to conceal this distressing fact he never succeeded. My unpromising family made no effort to understand a man who admitted a distaste for business. At first they ridiculed, and then ignored my uncle's talents completely. Tiong Bing and his wife lived in their own separate pavilion and kept to themselves. I used to go there occasionally, impelled as much by curiosity as affection. I would squat fascinated beside him while, flattered by my interest, he fashioned the most irresistible animals out of a lump of clay. Later, Tiong Bing inherited a third of my grandfather's fortune, and not having to worry about the intricacies of business, left Java to lead a vague, happy life between Singapore and Paris.

The happiest moments of my childhood were spent at Salatiga, a mountain resort about two hours from Semarang. Salatiga, which means "Three Falls" in Javanese, was three thousand feet above sea level and always cool. Papa had bought a handsome house which Mama had done over, putting in her usual expensive marble floors and furnishing it with nice, simple rattan furniture. In Salatiga I had more room to run wild than in Semarang and I raced barefoot over the countryside from morning to night. I lived dangerously for one so young, for I took up baiting water buffalo, the most

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vicious beasts imaginable. They would race me to the nearest tree, up which I would clamber to safety. Being tenacious brutes, they would stand for a long time below, with lowered horns waiting to spike me.

The woods in Salatiga were acrawl with snakes, many of them poisonous, and why in my shoeless state I was never bitten remains an unexplained miracle. We had an unusually large flock of geese patrolling our grounds in search of reptilian prey, but sometimes the snakes evaded their vigilance and slithered much too close to the house for comfort. One year in Salatiga my constant companions were two small terriers which I had raised from the same litter. Both slept in my bedroom. One was sweet-tempered and stupid, the other the cleverest ratter amongst my pack of dogs. She hated cats too, and had a superb gift for pouncing on them, biting their jugular vein and then flinging them away abruptly. On a certain afternoon I left the house when everyone was taking a siesta, and just as I stepped off the verandah I stopped short, petrified with horror—for there was my stupid little dog held fast in the coils of an enormous snake. The snake was twisting so tightly about her body that she was completely helpless and had given up struggling. I screamed in terror but no one seemed to hear me except the other terrier, whom I had left in my room. I had shut the door and the only way she could get out was through a high window. I didn't know whether to run in and let her out or to try to kill the snake myself. But within a split second the other little terrier had scrambled over the window sill and in a flash had seized the snake just behind its head. Taken by surprise, the snake uncoiled, releasing its victim. Lashing about wildly it tried to coil about its attacker. The terrier danced back and over the snake's body, avoiding the whipping tail with the skill of a toreador, yet keeping her

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grip at the base of the snake's head. It seemed hours, but actually it must have been only a few minutes before everything was over and eight feet of dead snake lay twitching at my feet.

The Javanese volcanos are mostly well behaved. Once every several hundred years there is a serious eruption; every now and then a volcano crater splits and the lake which it cradled goes cascading down the mountainside; but even minor eruptions are a rarity. In Salatiga we were not far from a benign volcano which had never bothered anyone as far as we knew, yet on one occasion it did the unpredictable and frightened us almost to death.

Mama had been busy enlarging her garden, and when the native coolies cleared away the tangled underbrush they found an old Chinese tomb. There was nothing especially interesting about this tomb, but somehow I like to believe it belonged to me. I would sit near it and weave fairy tales about the unknown person buried there. One unusually sultry morning I asked Mama to come out with me. While we sat talking the sky became overcast, and a great cloud began slowly to obscure the sun. As it thickened, the sun glowed through the gloom, blood-red and sinister. Softly the ashes began to fall, their stealthy silence in eerie contrast to the noisy splash of tropical rain. We ran back to the house as fast as we could and had scarcely reached the verandah, when the whole world was plunged in suffocating darkness. The ashes sifted down in a solid sheet. Gasping for breath, we fastened all the doors and windows. The terrified servants crowded into the main hall and falling prostrate on the floor, prayed, crying that the end of the world had come. Outside we could hear the natives' wails rising high above the staccato

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thud of tomtoms which they beat frantically to frighten the evil spirits who had stolen their sun. We remained huddled together for hours, until at last the darkness had begun to lift. We peered out on a new world, a land blanketed in gray-white as if some errant blizzard had swept over Java. The ash covered everything, shrouding the garden and lawns. Birds and countless small animals had been smothered and their bodies were buried in ashes. Trees were stripped of leaves and our luxuriant tropical Salatiga looked as forlorn as the snow-swept plateaus of Tibet.

(8.)

A Little Learning

As a child I was allergic to all forms of education. I had learnt French in a fluent but slipshod manner quite unintentionally, because our first governess was a Belgian. She, poor soul, had her hands full. Not only did she come to grips with me but also had to struggle with my oldest sister and Tjiem Nio, my young aunt. I disliked her with a fine fury because she shocked my budding sense of fastidiousness by constantly picking her teeth. Then too, the heat made her feet swell, and to ease her discomfort she slipped off her shoes whenever she imagined herself unobserved. When Mama was away from the house she walked about in her stocking feet, which somehow annoyed me though I seldom wore shoes

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myself. The Belgian evidently became discouraged with us, for she soon left and was replaced by a series of Dutch governesses, good, bad and indifferent. Their personal characteristics mattered little, for I behaved outrageously to them all. One in particular stands out in my mind as being especially repulsive. She was fat, had short-cut greasy hair and drank iced milk by the quart. If any of these unfortunates succeeded in keeping me occupied for an hour each day it was considered miraculous.

I had two nurses, one Javanese, one Chinese. They played a much more important part in my life, though they too were totally incapable of controlling me. My Chinese amah was a widow and the daughter of a Buddhist priest. As such, she enjoyed a nice position in the community and was fairly prosperous. But I managed to make her life miserable and used to terrorize her into submission by biting her. I tried this successfully one day as she was forcing me to wear a starched dress instead of the soft silks and linens which I liked. Once I had tasted "blood" I kept right on biting everyone who thwarted my evil temper. My Javanese nurse had formerly taken care of my sister, and by the time I came along was a disreputable-looking, toothless old hag. I adored her and followed her whenever I could to her hut in the native kampong, so that finally Mama, in exasperation, pensioned her and sent her away.

Mama, who was more determined than ever that I was to cut a figure in the world, decided that I should be thoroughly equipped to meet every requirement, but I stubbornly continued to shut my eyes, ears and mind to any suggestion of learning, and it was not until Miss Elizabeth Jones joined our household that I began to cooperate even mildly with Mama's plans. We were in Paris a few years before the first World War on our first trip to Europe when Miss Jones

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arrived with the best of references. Because she was new, I was suspicious and ignored her without being deliberately rude. She in turn was equally wary of me, recognizing at once how difficult a proposition she had in hand, and approached me with the greatest care. Her method was suggestion rather than coercion, and she never forced me to do anything. On the long voyage home I listened with rapt attention to her stories. Before I realized it, she roused my interest in Egypt, Greece and the younger Western civilizations. Without ever sitting down for a formal lesson and quite without benefit of books I absorbed Roman and European history in painless doses. She answered my most outrageous questions calmly and without impatience, never once losing her temper, a remarkable feat considering my disposition. There was nothing lovable about Miss Jones, but I was not too spoiled to recognize her fine integrity, and soon began to respect her enormously. Miss Jones was staid, quite colorless and without a trace of humor. She had mild brown hair and a long thin nose beaked conveniently to anchor her pince-nez. She dressed quite smartly, was painfully neat and never left the house without her parasol, which she used partly to protect her faded complexion and partly as a substitute for the umbrella she carried in colder countries. Though she had lived in the tropics much of her adult life she refused to admit the climate, and every morning at eleven, no matter how torrid the day, she downed a large cup of cocoa accompanied by precisely three English biscuits. Miss Jones was a devout Roman Catholic, ate fish every Friday and though the nearest Catholic church was miles away, she drove there each Sunday.

Papa paid Miss Jones treble her usual salary, realizing that it meant giving up all contact with her family and friends to live with us in Java. She became quite a queen in

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our household. She had her own separate pavilion, her own horse and carriage. Miss Jones loved to drive out at twilight and even when automobiles came into fashion Papa let her keep her carriage.

My sister, Tjong-lan, and I spoke Dutch and Malay with equal fluency. French we knew well, English we had never attempted. Miss Jones was an excellent linguist. Our first common language was French but within the year I was busily translating French history into English. When Miss Jones succeeded in initiating me into the mysteries of Shakespeare, Mama was incredulous.

Miss Jones believed in a strict regime. Each morning promptly at five o'clock I rode for two hours before the heat set in. Gone were the old helter-skelter bareback rides and though I careened over hills and across country I wore a correct British riding habit and was accompanied by a groom. My newly serious attitude towards lady-like equitation had been encouraged by Papa, who presented me with a string of four horses, one for myself and one for the groom to ride, and a pair of spectacular piebald horses from Australia which I drove in my phaeton. From eight o'clock until luncheon I studied with Miss Jones, taking time out for her inevitable biscuits and cocoa. After luncheon Miss Jones napped in her pavilion and I worked off my excess energy tearing around madly with my pack of dogs. At four I started my piano or dancing lessons, my Chinese music or my Chinese classics, varying them in rotation from day to day. At six, if I did not meet Papa at his office, Miss Jones and I drove out in the style which she deemed appropriate for a daughter of the important and influential Mr. Oei Tiong Ham. We went spanking along the roads in a stylish landau drawn by a pair of handsome horses, with a smart coachman and groom on the box, both immaculate in starched

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white suits and batik turbans. The groom, as an added bit of elegance, carried a glorified fly swatter under his arm, a mammoth white horse tail topped by a long red handle, which pleased him so mightily that he hated to unfurl it and switched the horses only when he was sure to be seen. Miss Jones carried her parasol high and I sat erect in queenly fashion with my shoulders well back, happily conscious of my pretty dress and of the monster bow which projected fashionably in stiffened loops from either side of my head.

I had begun my lessons in Chinese literature and penmanship before the happy advent of Miss Jones, but I had as usual been singularly unreceptive. My sister and I often shared the same teachers, most of them paunchy old Chinese with long queues and voices which droned like tired bees. I seldom bothered to listen, and soothed by their voices, either dozed or sank inertly into a numb lethargy. The Four Books and the Five Classics form the basic structure of Chinese learning; the former concern the teachings of the Confucian sages, the most important of whom was Mencius, the latter are a collection compiled by Confucius, consisting of history, odes, chronicles and standards of Chinese behavior. The Five Classics were written down during the lifetime of Confucius in the Fifth Century before Christ, yet their content is pertinent today and it was Confucius himself who originated the Golden Rule: "What you would not others should do unto you, do not unto them."

As Miss Jones refused to interfere with my Chinese lessons, Mama complained bitterly about me to Papa. He infuriated her by answering flippantly, "Oh! She is far too beautiful to ever have her head bothered by lessons!"

Miss Jones, whose versatility was a constant surprise, gave me piano lessons, but it was Mama who discovered a beautiful Cantonese actress to teach me Chinese music. The

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Cantonese actress came every afternoon even when we had no time for a lesson. Her presence in our house caused no end of lifted eyebrows among Mama's family and friends, for actresses were not considered respectable in those days. My friend had come to Java with a troupe of actors and her lovely face and skin had caused havoc amongst the men in Semarang. She was a dear and most patient and managed to teach me scores of local South Chinese songs and to accompany myself expertly on a queer instrument that was about two feet long, had thirty-six strings and was hammered by two flexible bamboo sticks.

Miss Jones disliked my Chinese music, but took the keenest interest in my dancing. She engaged a masculine teacher who taught both ballet and ballroom dancing and while Miss Jones strummed the piano we circled solemnly about the room. My toe-dancing career was short lived. Mama, happening to come to see my progress, became horribly alarmed lest the ballet routine should over-develop my calves. So the lessons ended promptly.

The Cantonese actress who taught me Chinese music first introduced glamour into my life. A troupe of South China actors and actresses happened to be in Semarang. I was much too young, but I persuaded Papa to have one of his secretaries take me almost every night. I became desperately stage-struck. While the plays were the ageless, conventional Chinese theatrical fare, the troupe itself was rather modern. Actors and actresses appeared on the stage together and there were no female impersonators to usurp the feminine rôles. My interest in the drama was heightened by falling in love with a handsome young man who was always the hero. I was utterly enthralled by his every gesture and, as in each different play he fell in love with the same delightful actress, I watched her intently. I concluded that if my hero was

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always in love with her, he would fall in love with me if I could imitate her successfully. At home I tried to act as much like the actress as possible. My dainty new mannerisms and ladylike affectations worried the family, who were convinced that I had contracted some grotesque disease. But as my chosen rôle was the essence of refinement, Miss Jones looked quizzically over her pince-nez and never said a word. When I grew tired of play-acting I would withdraw mysteriously to my room and lovingly write my hero's name over and over again on a piece of rice paper. This was the first time I had felt sentimental. My softened mood lasted for several months before I reverted to type.

It was quite by chance that I went into the poultry business. From one of our Chinese cooks I begged three unusually large eggs with the idea that they might contain some queer kind of bird. I drew my name carefully on each one and trotted off to see an aunt who raised chickens as a hobby. She obligingly set them under a hen and when the young chicks hatched I tied a red silk thread around the legs of what I was certain were my own birds. When they were half grown I took them home and singled out a coal black hen as my especial pet. I kept her with me all day, insisting that she showed marked intelligence, and at night she slept on a perch in my room. My nurses and the native servants were shocked at this new whim, considering it definitely inelegant to keep chickens in the house. I enjoyed the bother of feeding and taking care of my hen until one day she started fluffing out her feathers and pecking. When my Javanese nurse explained that my hen wanted to lay eggs and have little chickens, I reluctantly allowed her to be removed.

A Little Learning

At this point I went into the poultry business in earnest. Papa's aunt, a wealthy widow who lived quietly in a wing of our house, helped put my venture on a businesslike footing. She was a thrifty old body and soon had me collecting newspapers and magazines which I sold by weight to the junk man. As Papa read almost a dozen daily papers and Mama subscribed to all the innumerable illustrated magazines, I managed to make enough money to pay for my poultry feed. Soon I had special chicken coops with a man to tend them, and made a most advantageous deal to sell my eggs and poultry to our various cooks. My parents asked their friends to see my chicken farm, and Papa's business associates were so amused that they showered me with presents of the most exotic poultry they could find. Some came all the way from Australia, others from the islands near Java—Sumatra, Bantam. There were tiny "cotton" chickens, fluffy as a wisp of wool, beautifully colored birds, half wild and with clipped wings to keep them from flying away. Purely by accident I was responsible for several new breeds of chickens! I penned the different kinds separately, but when the wild cockerels fought I would toss one of the combatants amongst the ordinary barnyard fowl. Soon the ordinary chickens began to lay speckled eggs and when they hatched most of the chicks were spattered with the most extraordinary colored markings.

Papa had been impressed as well as amused by the business ability I had shown in running my chicken farm. He was tickled at my initiative in selling the household waste paper, and now he thought it high time I learned the real value of money, so when I was eleven he turned over all the household expenses to me to handle. I was given a lump sum to cover not only the market, grocery and incidental household bills, but to pay for all the expenses of the stables as

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well. I had to keep everything running in the accustomed style, but whatever I could save off the budget was mine to keep. Once a week there was a complete household reckoning at which I functioned importantly. A cashier was sent from Papa's bank with several large bags of copper and silver coins, each denomination in separate little rolls. The house servants, the gardeners and the stablemen all lined up in front of a small table at which the cashier and I were seated. It took a good two hours to pay them off, for there were more than forty servants, not including the outside staff, and almost every one of them unfolded some woeful tale of financial difficulty with the most exquisite and painstaking attention to detail. We allowed them to borrow a week's wages in advance, no more, for whatever sums they had tucked into the belt of their sarongs would be gambled away immediately. Occasionally one of them would be in real trouble, and after careful investigation we would give him additional assistance.

My old great aunt, who still watched over my finances, took the greatest delight in showing me how to pinch pennies—and she personally banked my profits, holding Papa to his bargain of paying me four percent!

(9.)

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We spent several months each year in Singapore after Papa began to carry on a variety of flourishing business enterprises throughout the Malay Straits Settlement. Singapore always seemed glamorous to me, and even as a very young girl I found its color and vivacity fascinating. Through the crowded streets, a kaleidoscopic parade of bizarre peoples strolled leisurely. There were swarthy emaciated Indians, Arabs swirled in flowing draperies, delicate Burmese, squat little Filipinos, aristocratic Ceylonese, Chinese in their soft slippers and pillbox hats; each nationality led a totally different life in its own quarter, and kept its

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own shops and bazaars. The Singapore tempo was carefree, a sharp contrast to Java.

We lived in the British residential section on the outskirts of the city, where the red clay roads were as smooth as the palm of your hand. The trim houses were typically English and surrounded by broad, billiard-green lawns. In Singapore it was the chic thing to employ white-turbaned Sikhs as private guards. We had six magnificently bearded specimens. They never cut their hair, tying it into a top-knot under the turban, while their beards, brushed smooth and curled stylishly at the edges, caused them no end of trouble and had to be put up each night in string curlers. Though our private army looked desperately fierce, they were mild creatures who ate no meat and adhered strictly to their religion. They refused even to handle a plate containing meat, and when special food was prepared for Papa's sister who lived some little distance away they would punctiliously inquire what the covered dishes contained before venturing to deliver them. These Indians from the Punjab stood aloof from the household servants, and lived in their own quarters. They did their own cooking over braziers and permitted no one to come near the delicious curries they concocted. Should an unbeliever touch the food it became defiled and had to be thrown away. I soon discovered this intriguing fact and out of sheer perverseness hung around their quarters waiting for a chance to stick my finger in their food or touch a dish with my impudent toe. For some time the Sikhs endured my behavior with the greatest restraint, hoping, I suppose, that I would grow tired of this diversion. But finally in desperation, they locked up food, plates and cooking utensils whenever I appeared.

Life in Singapore moved along agreeably, for I had companions around my own age. There were three boys and a

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girl, the children of Papa's sister. As we formed an inseparable quartet, it was considered quite safe for us to roam together, and every morning we drove out to a marvelous beach where we swam and chased each other up and down the sand for hours. The Lims were the only friends I ever made during my childhood, and when I returned to Java I missed them enormously.

In Singapore I was sent to a riding school to learn to ride side saddle and to polish my slap-dash way of jumping. My English riding master was a quaint character who had a rare and entertaining gift for conversation. He had lived long in Singapore and had raised an unusual family. His daughter had been successfully wooed and wed by the fabulously wealthy Sultan of Johore, and had settled down to the sheltered life of a sultana as casually as if she were keeping house in some small British suburb. His son became a veterinary surgeon but varied his profession by raising sheep and then, to satisfy some submerged sporting instinct, chasing them around and around a field, finally finishing them off with a hunting rifle. From time to time he sent Mama a shoulder of lamb or a rack of chops, a much appreciated delicacy, for in those days in Singapore fresh meat was unobtainable and we had to content ourselves with frozen carcasses which had been shipped from Europe or Australia weeks before.

Papa became so pleased with my progress at jumping that he presented me with several fast-stepping little horses and a phaeton so tiny that only myself and a native groom could squeeze in. I was thirteen and grown-up enough to drive myself. In Singapore, it was smart to drive out in the cool of the afternoon through the Botanical Gardens and up and down the Plain, a high, flat stretch of land overlooking the sea. The keenest rivalry existed between owners of fast

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horses, and every afternoon impromptu trotting races were run. This provided a pleasant excuse for striking up flirtations, and Singapore's young sports, if they wanted to attract a girl's attention, would whip up their horses, pass her carriage, then slow down and let the lady take precedence again. During this harmless manoeuvre smiles and nods were exchanged, and to those who were still young and romantic these episodes provided varying degrees of excitement. Soon after I acquired my horses and phaeton, I noticed a dashing young Chinese who was driving a spirited pair. He gave me one quick glance, then flicked his whip across his horses; I touched mine and away we went. Weeks flew by, we never met or exchanged a word, but every afternoon raced each other as swiftly as we dared. Sometimes he won, sometimes I carried off the honors. For us it was tremendously exhilarating, although as we stepped up our paces we became somewhat of a menace to the slower moving traffic. At last, early one morning while I was out riding with the riding master we met and talked for the first time. Our giddy races had been far too conspicuous to escape comment and Papa soon learned all about them. His inquiries revealed the young man to be the son of a wealthy Cantonese merchant who had large business interests in Singapore, and as such the young man was of course eminently eligible. Papa invited him to our house and we were formally introduced. I was thirteen, he a few years older, and we promptly fell in love. Shortly afterwards, we went to China on a business trip, and to my delight I found my beau on the steamer with us. I was in a daze of happiness during the whole excursion and firmly believed that this was the man I would marry. But while we were away, Papa's agents had ferreted out the startling information that, although only sixteen, he already had a wife. He had not dared tell his family about his clandestine

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marriage, and when he fell in love with me unwisely tried to keep his secret.

At first I refused to believe what I had been told. It all seemed too incredible and cruel, and when I became convinced, I went wild with fury. I wanted that young man even if he had a dozen wives. For the first time in my life my desires were in real danger of being thwarted. When Papa tried to soothe me I shouted, "Well, what are divorces for?"

Quite unabashed, I contrived to see the young man whenever I could, though of course it was forbidden. Papa never mentioned his name again. Without consulting my wishes, he calmly shipped my horses to Semarang and ordered Mama to close up the house and take me back to Java. I knew it was useless to rebel. Heartbroken, I returned to Java believing myself embittered with life forever.

After I had been sent back from Singapore in disgrace, the next few years of my life were uneventful and dull. I had no suitors, no girl friends, and I felt very sorry for myself. I was in the throes of adolescent growing pains and longed for glamour and romance. I wanted to live like the girls I read about in the social pages of the London dailies. I wanted to be a *débutante* and have parties and balls given for me. I poured over the illustrated magazines, the *Tatler*, *Sketch* and the *Graphic*. For the first time I became really conscious of Papa's wealth, and I thought it a shame that my beautiful clothes and jewellery and education should go to waste with no one to see or admire them. I started to take an interest in my looks and sat for hours in front of my big mirror pinning up my hair in different ways.

Several months later when Papa returned from Singapore I did my best to persuade him to give me permission to go to America and try for a job in the theatre. I had no special urge for acting, but I was determined to become famous and

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this was the only means I could think of to make people notice me. Papa, who believed that there was an aura of disrepute about anything theatrical, answered curtly, "To be famous is one thing and to be notorious is another," and added with his usual deadly logic that I could never endure a life requiring steady discipline.

After this setback I resigned myself to a drab existence. I was biding my time, for I knew the day would come when I could live my life the way I wanted. I prepared for this happy day quite systematically. I rode hard, practised my dancing and worked at perfecting my French and English. I swam, played the piano and studied. Miss Jones, who censored every book, provided me with excellent if not exactly thrilling literary fare, which I downed determinedly.

We still continued to do a great deal of traveling. I loved the excitement of packing and of getting on trains and boats much more than the actual places. Amoy, Canton, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Penang and Burma, each city had its special highlights. Together they blended into a bright patch-work quilt, but each place we visited took on a certain quality of sameness because I saw everything through Papa's eyes.

Canton, as I knew it, was a quiet place, crisscrossed with little lanes too narrow for carriages or automobiles, and we were carried swiftly from place to place in sedan chairs. Fringing the river banks were strings of lovely flower boats, where, I was told, all the gay ladies lived. I was never allowed to go near them, but at night I watched them curiously from a distance. The river-front belles entertained constantly. Boats glowed with colored lanterns, and the sound of music and laughter floated tantalizingly over the staid quarters of the city. In Canton Papa attended an exhausting series of dinners given by old-fashioned Chinese. I was often brought along, though it was decidedly unusual for a mere

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child to be present at a masculine dinner party. Papa had lived so much abroad that his elderly friends excused his manner of bringing up a daughter, accepted me as a matter of course and paid little attention to me.

We went to Shanghai from time to time, usually in the summer when it was painfully hot. Shanghai was still a provincial town, not yet grown into the modern cosmopolitan city it is today. There were marshlands and unhealthy swamps where the handsome buildings of the foreign section now stand. The skyscraper hotels, foreign restaurants and cafes were non-existent and Shanghai's gaudy night life had not started to bloom. It was dull for me after Singapore and Java, and the only facet of Shanghai life which impressed me vividly were the sing-song girls. The Shanghai girls were big and sturdy, yet their extravagantly bound feet were the size of a four-year-old child's. They could barely walk. Their coiffures were fearfully complicated, hair coiled at the neck, generous bangs, and sideburns which reached almost to the chin and which were lacquered to the cheeks. During their occasional daytime outings they drove around in victorias dressed in brightly brocaded jackets and trousers, their faces half concealed by the dark glasses which were the high fashion of the moment. But in the evening the sing-song girls were magically transformed into exotic creatures from the Arabian Nights. They used to be carried to their various rendezvous on the shoulder of huge, half-naked coolies. The coolie draped a towel over one shoulder and held the sing-song girl firmly on her perch, with an arm around her waist and one hand grasping both pathetic little feet. He moved with a swift practised rhythm, his sweat-streaked face glistening in the dim light of the street lamps; the girl, with her arm around his neck, swaying slightly to his stride.

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Once, when I was quite small, we traveled to Burma. The Burmese women are finely modelled, exquisitely beautiful little creatures, and nothing could have been more incongruous than to see them suddenly delve into draperies and produce long black cheroots. They smoked incessantly, and at the theatre, where the men sat separately, the women's section was almost blotted from sight by a thick haze of smoke. There were a great many other attractions to please my fancy in Burma. We went out to the lumber camps to see a regiment of patient elephants skillfully sorting teak logs and dragging them into separate piles; we shopped for rubies which were so fantastically cheap that Papa bought the smaller stones in packages to distribute as souvenirs amongst the mevrouws of Semarang.

Meanwhile the war had broken out in Europe, which brought a great wave of prosperity throughout the Orient. Papa's sugar sky-rocketed, his other interests flourished, and he was busier than ever. On our trips to China everyone we met was violently anti-German. The newspapers were crammed with German atrocity stories, but it wasn't until August, 1917, that China joined up against the Central Powers. Though thousands of workers had been shipped to France to aid the Allies, there was little military commotion in the streets.

My sister Tiong-lan was now married and had gone to England, where my brother-in-law was studying medicine. Mama and I went with Papa on his innumerable journeyings between Singapore and China. At last I began to harvest the attention I wanted so badly. Papa, whose fortune had reached fantastic proportions during the war boom, was featured in the papers wherever we went and I, his daughter, was the heiress of the moment. I was snowed under by all sorts of fan mail. There were letters proposing marriage,

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and more exciting, letters suggesting secret assignations. Boxes of candy and bouquets of flowers were sent to the hotels where we happened to be staying. But, alas, the candy and flowers were thrown away, and all my mail was opened either by Papa or one of his secretaries. Only occasionally was I allowed to read one of my own letters. Even if I had wanted to speak to a stranger or arrange a meeting it would have been impossible. Papa knew that my mind was filled with romantic notions—I was always on the alert for some dashing Lochinvar—and he took no chances. I was surrounded by a network of spies; the grooms reported to Papa, the French maid reported to Miss Jones, and the secretaries to Mama.

When we lived in hotels Papa came into my room every night after I was in bed. He peered under the bed, poked into the closets and looked behind the curtains. Mama laughed at all these precautions, saying that it was Papa's evil conscience that made him act this way. In spite of all this elaborate spying, there was never anything exciting to report.



PART TWO

The Man I Married

(10.)

Practically Romantic

Before I had reached my 'teens we all had made a hilarious tour through Europe. The trip had been primarily planned as a rest cure for Papa, but it soon developed into a shopping spree for Mama and my sister. Mama had never worn European clothes, her wardrobe was entirely Oriental, and as modern streamlined Chinese dresses had not yet come into fashion, she was weighted down with heavily pleated skirts and cumbersome long-sleeved jackets. So Europe became a Heaven-sent opportunity, and our ship had scarcely docked in Naples when Mama, my sister and one of Papa's English speaking secretaries rushed down the gang-plank. They were away for hours and returned completely dis-

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guised in European finery. The same performance was repeated in Paris, and while I was too young to be interested in dresses, my family's determination to become completely Parisienne amused me mildly. It was the ridiculous period of pompadours, rats and stiff marcel waves. A coiffeur was called in each evening, but in the morning Mama and sister had to re-create the complicated effects themselves, and I found their struggles highly diverting.

I had caught the grippe in Paris and when I was well Papa gave me an automobile, a Great Dane, and a bulldog. The car was dazzling white with scarlet cushions, and in my selfish ecstasy I refused point-blank to permit either Mama or my sister to step inside. To keep peace, Papa hastily bought Mama a Daimler painted a gay primrose yellow and striped in green. Our colorful cavalcade drawn up in front of the Grand Hotel attracted excitable onlookers every day. In the afternoons Papa, the dogs and I would be piloted out to Longchamps or Fontainebleau, leaving the ladies to pursue their shopping unmolested. I am rather hazy about the rest of the tour, except that in England I discovered fried Dover sole, and in Switzerland, which we did atop a coach-and-four, Papa would stop whenever we came to an orchard, to indulge my craving for green gage plums. It had all been rather like a dream and I repeatedly urged Papa to take us again, but until after the Armistice another jaunt to Europe had been impossible.

In 1919 Mama became impatient to see my sister, who was living in London, and it was decided that I should accompany her to Europe. To my bitter disappointment, Papa was unable to leave his business. My parents said good-bye with no premonition that this was their final farewell. Mama and I set out forlornly, traveling directly to London, where we rented an outrageously expensive house in Berkeley

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Square. We hit it off well from the start, though at first it seemed strange being alone with Mama. From the age of five I had seldom been separated from Papa, and had come to believe we could not get on without each other. My sister lived near us in a small house, and we found her life very dull. However, the vagaries of London housekeeping kept us quite busy with its jumble of Chinese amah, Malay servant, French maid, and cockneys. Mama with her usual extravagance purchased two automobiles which she did not in the least need, and then suddenly decided to visit the Italian Lakes.

We set off leisurely for northern Italy, omitting no point of interest even vaguely hinted at in Baedeker. Mama was a great trial to me; in addition to her capacity for sight-seeing she loved markets and almost every morning routed me out of bed before six to admire the local fruits and vegetables. In London I had bought an extravagant wardrobe of European clothes, so every night when we dined *tête-à-tête* I wore one of my beautiful new evening gowns. Though my vanity was somewhat appeased when the other guests stared, it was not much fun always being alone. On the streets I was both amused and shocked by Italian behavior. A Chinese girl was a rare curiosity in Italy, and I caused a sensation wherever I went. A mob of men, women and children followed me constantly, and when I stopped walking they surrounded me, fingering my clothes and actually touching my face and hands. The carabinieri had to come to my rescue and shoo the crowds away half a dozen times a day.

We reached Venice in August, just at the peak of the social season, with a letter of introduction to the Contessa Morosini, who owned one of the most beautiful palaces on the Grand Canal. Through the Contessa we met the Duchess of Sermoneta and the late Princess Jane di San Faustino, the lively American whose sharp tongue kept the Lido's in-

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ternational set completely at her mercy. I hardly noticed the extreme heat, for at last after so many weeks I had someone besides Mama to talk to.

Just as I was beginning to have a good time I contracted some kind of cholera and the flesh literally melted from my bones. When I was on the mend and barely strong enough to travel, Mama decided to cut our trip short and return to France. My sister had recently leased an apartment in Paris and from there had bombarded us with excited letters telling about a young man who she felt would make an ideal husband. He had fallen in love with my photograph, she wrote, and though omitting his name, she delicately hinted at his rank by asking me if I would like to be addressed as "Excellency." The letters were followed by daily telegrams demanding to know the date of our arrival in Paris, and finally Mama, who probably knew more about my unknown suitor than she admitted, gave in to her elder daughter's insistence. I was too ill to care very much, and dismissed my sister's enthusiasm as utterly absurd.

We were whisked off the train in Paris and rushed to an apartment which had been rented for us in the Avenue de la Bourdennais. Exhausted after the long journey, I was dismayed to learn that my sister was giving a large dinner party that same evening. The Peace Conference was in session in Paris and her guests of honor were to be General Tang and Dr. V. K. Wellington Koo, the Chinese minister to the United States, both of them members of the Chinese delegation. I refused to be impressed and thought it strange when my sister fussed over my hair and gown and said that she wanted me to look my best. I was allowed to wear my favorite dinner dress, an amazing creation with full Turkish trousers made of green chiffon, a gold lamé bodice and a brief yellow jacket. I tucked gold and green flowers in my

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hair and wore a triple strand of pearls which Papa had bought me at Cartier's.

I was seated beside His Excellency, Dr. Wellington Koo, at dinner. He was slight, neatly dressed, his thick hair cut *en brosse*. We talked together in English and I noticed that he took unusual pains to make his conversation interesting. In spite of this politeness his personality did not impress me at the time. Dinner was nearly over before I began to suspect that Wellington Koo was my unknown suitor and the cause of our return to Paris.

Later in the evening additional guests arrived, all of them connected with China's large delegation to the Peace Conference. They were gay and informal, and before long we had all made plans to spend the following day together. As we started out *en masse* for Fontainebleau, I was skillfully separated from the others and manoeuvred into His Excellency's new high-powered French car.

When I returned home my sister wasted no time on subtlety and asked me directly how I liked Dr. Koo. I answered vaguely that I liked him well enough, but that both his clothes and his hair-cut were too old-fashioned.

"Fiddlesticks!" snapped my sister. "All that can be changed in a week's time!" Then she hit straight from the shoulder: "Mama and I want you to marry Dr. Koo. He's been in love with you ever since he saw your photograph."

I retorted tartly that I had no intention of marrying anyone, much less a man who, as I had just found out, was a widower with two small children.

As the days passed I began to be tremendously flattered by the attentions Dr. Koo showered on me. Nothing I desired to do was too much trouble for him. He accompanied me everywhere and suffered my unreasonable foibles patiently.

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I accepted his devotion as a matter of course. Years later I was to marvel that his work never had been neglected.

Ten days later Wellington proposed. We had remained chatting in Mama's dining room after dinner; I leaned lightly against the table while he stood in front of me, talking earnestly of his career, his interesting life in Washington and finally of his wife who had died the previous year in an influenza epidemic. He was not a rich man, he said, and had to live on his salary as minister, which was adequate but not extravagant. He wanted to take care of me, though it could not be on the same luxurious scale.

I demanded time to think it over. It would take me ever so long to make up my mind, I explained, and Wellington agreed not to press me for an answer.

The next morning I nonchalantly told my sister that His Excellency had proposed. She was wild with delight and took it for granted I had accepted. When I disillusioned her she lost her temper completely.

"You always were a little goose, but don't continue to play the fool all your life! I'm going to tell Mama right away!" As she ran from the room I shouted after her, "That won't make the least bit of difference! I'll make up my own mind—and if you nag I'll refuse altogether!"

Mama and my sister were closeted together for a long time. They must have decided not to urge me further, for when I saw them later in the day they deftly skirted the dangerous subject. I was in a belligerent mood, aching for an argument, and their forbearance annoyed me.

Our Chinese friends learned of the situation with lightning rapidity. Before I realized what was happening they had launched a relentless campaign of persuasion. Within the next few days I had been shunted into corners by a dozen prominent Chinese, all of whom lectured me earnestly.

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General Tang's wife talked to me about my duty to my country. Dr. C. T. Wang, a most distinguished statesman, employed his famous oratorical powers to praise Wellington Koo in glowing terms. Mademoiselle Soumé Tseng, the only Chinese woman ever to be decorated with the Legion of Honor—and who is now Madame Wei Tao-ming, wife of the Chinese ambassador to the United States—was even more persuasive. She stressed the fact that it was the solemn duty of every Chinese man and woman to work for his or her country and that I with my fine education and material advantages could do a great deal for China. It was difficult for a woman to work alone, she said, and I would prove of much greater value if I combined forces with brilliant Dr. Koo.

During all the excitement I secretly cabled Papa in Singapore. His characteristic reply made me feel warm and safe. I was not to marry His Excellency unless I wanted to; if I had any doubts I was to take the first boat back to Singapore. A few days later Papa cabled me again. He made a searching investigation and discovered that Dr. Koo had an ex-wife still living unobtrusively in Shanghai. They had been married in 1908 and divorced the same year. This was upsetting, because old-fashioned Chinese still refused to recognize divorce.

I learned later that the Koos had married their son out of gratitude to the daughter of a physician who had saved his life during a dangerous illness. The bride had been brought up conventionally and never saw her groom until their wedding day. The marriage took place while Wellington, still a student at Columbia University, was in China, on vacation. When the new country proved too lonely she obtained, in accordance with Chinese law, a divorce by mutual agreement, and returned to China.

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Mama was shrewd enough to know that Papa had played up Dr. Koo's divorce far beyond its importance. But the thousands of miles between them made her independent enough to cable angrily her intention of going through with my marriage without his consent. Days went by, and I could not make up my mind. Then Mama called me into her room and without preliminaries came right to the point. "Either give your consent to marry the man I have chosen, or else never see me again. Dr. Koo is attractive, distinguished and has a brilliant future. No girl could want more. You have been brought up and trained in filial duty. My hopes and ambitions have centered on your success. If you fail me now, then go back to your Father. I will have nothing more to do with you and you need never see me again."

When Mama had finished speaking, I felt quite numb. I did not know whether to run away or to cry. I did neither, but stood there silent, thinking fast. I loved my father dearly, but I could not spend my whole life with him in Java. Marriage meant freedom and opportunity to do what I wanted. It was the door opening on all that was exciting in life. I admired His Excellency's wisdom, and his devotion touched and flattered me.

That evening I told Wellington I would marry him. Our engagement was announced on the Tenth of October, which is known in China as the Double Tenth Celebration, our national holiday.

We plunged into a round of entertainments and to celebrate our engagement, my fiancé gave a dinner and ball in my honour at the Ritz. It was an official function, hundreds of guests were invited and as etiquette forbade me from acting as hostess, Madame Tai, wife of the Chinese minister to Spain, came from Madrid to fill the rôle. The ball must have been confusing to most of the guests. Because of the

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Peace Conference, almost every nationality was represented, and few of them knew each other. No one outside Chinese circles was aware of my identity, and many called me Madame Koo, mistaking me for my fiancé's late wife. I was too excited to care, and in a new evening gown cut a daring décolletage I danced hectically throughout the evening, but not with my fiancé. He had never learned to dance, and considered it definitely abandoned for a Chinese woman to permit such physical intimacy.

When the Peace Conference ended my fiancé was called back to his duties in Washington. He was anxious for us to marry at once, and suggested that we return to his post together. I flatly refused to consider such a plan. America seemed unglamorous to me. London with its glittering court life had much more appeal. Wellington explained patiently that a diplomat could not pick and choose, but must go where he was assigned. As there was an able Chinese minister to Great Britain, Wellington saw little chance of being transferred from Washington to London.

Mama refused to take any chances. When my fiancé sailed for the United States she decided it was safer to follow, and without telling me, booked our passage a month later. I startled Mama and my sister by making no objections. By then I had sunk into a state of pleasant lethargy, and was so delighted with my new importance that any proposition seemed enchanting.

After a rough crossing, Wellington's secretary conducted us directly from the boat to a comfortable house near Annapolis. The big living rooms and wide porches appealed to me and the Negro servants fascinated Mama because they were such a gentle contrast to the surly "Black Dutchmen" who had served us in Java.

Important business kept my fiancé in Washington for

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several days, and we were comfortably settled before he arrived. As his motor swept up the driveway I saw to my dismay that his two children were with him. I knew of course that he had a five-year-old boy and a daughter a year younger, but their existence had seemed unreal; I had never visualized them as being part of my future life. The children were in charge of a massive, jet-black mammy, and hovering behind them was old Wang, my fiancé's valet, who had been devoted to the children's mother. Old Wang looked at me disapprovingly, and the little boy and girl, quite shy and bewildered, were propelled forward by the mammy to present me with a bouquet of flowers. Mama, sensing my utter consternation, rushed the babies upstairs, and arranged to have them kept out of my sight as much as possible. The following day, when their father formally introduced me as their future mother, I was astonished to discover that neither of them spoke a word of Chinese.

The days passed uneventfully. Wellington was forced to remain the greater part of the time in Washington, and though he urged us to stay at the Chinese Legation, I obstinately refused. Then, at last, in the autumn of 1920, the exciting news came of Wellington's transfer as Minister to the Court of St. James. Mama was irritatingly calm—she had always been sure of this appointment. We had to laugh when we discovered her optimism had already taken the tangible form of leasing a house outside London. It was absurdly large, in the fashionable suburb of Wimbledon, and boasted a superfluous white and gold ballroom. There were acres of gardens, fruit orchards and impressive hot-houses where Mama later raised her prize chrysanthemums.

On reaching London, Mama's first thought was to engage an English governess for Wellington's little boy and girl. They were sweet, docile children, and I was entirely devoted

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to them, but Mama, who was determined to avoid any possible friction before my marriage, took complete charge and kept them very much in the background.

After the children were settled, Mama turned her attention to my trousseau, for though no definite date had been set for the wedding, it was expected to take place as soon as possible after Wellington's arrival in Europe. My sister was allotted the somewhat uninteresting task of picking out linens and other household necessities, while Mama and I shopped for more exciting items. Mama had persuaded Papa to give me two wedding presents, a Rolls Royce limousine and a gold and silver dinner service, both of which she considered essential to my proper debut in diplomatic circles.

While we were choosing my Rolls Royce, Mama became so fascinated by the luxurious new models that she coolly ordered another for herself and a third for my sister. Papa must have been startled when he received her wire announcing that instead of a single Rolls, three had been charged to his account. But he never refused his wife's maddest request and was resigned to the fact that no matter how much money he supplied she would invariably cable back "not sufficient—send double the amount."

My engagement ring was a beautiful Kashmir sapphire. Partly out of affectation, partly to annoy Mama and my sister, I refused to choose my wedding gown. So they selected a conventional white satin creation fashioned in European style. The dress was made by Callot, then one of the smartest Parisian couturiers, who also persuaded Mama to buy a fabulously expensive lace veil.

Wellington Koo landed in France in early November. He did not want to be married in London, and as the Chinese

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minister in Paris was on leave, he made arrangements for our wedding at the Legation in Brussels. He decided that it was better for us not to meet until just before the ceremony, which was set for November the fourteenth.

Mama and I arrived in Brussels the afternoon before my wedding. My brother-in-law had returned to China and my sister had fallen ill at the last moment, so we were quite alone. I had not seen my fiancé for two months, and though I tried to remain indifferent, I was thrilled when he met us at the station. I noticed that he had dressed to please me. His suit fitted well and was smartly cut. His hair was brushed back smoothly. I found him extremely good looking.

We went to our hotel and later all dined together quietly. I was shown all the arrangements for the next day. We were to be married in the large drawing room of the Legation, which had been beautifully decorated with Chinese embroideries and banked with flowers. The Chinese minister to Belgium and the minister to Spain were to act as my fiancé's sponsors, while their wives were to be my matrons of honor. The Chinese military attaché from Paris arrived to perform the Chinese civil marriage ceremony which conformed to Chinese law, for the Legation, like all diplomatic missions throughout the world, was under extraterritorial rights and maintained its own national jurisdiction.

I woke up early on my wedding morning, and lay in bed trying to analyze my feelings. I was surprised to find them passive. I merely wanted to have the ceremony over and done with as soon as possible. Mama was breathless with excitement. She had engaged a beautician to make up my face and a coiffeur to arrange my hair, which I wore in loose curls massed at the back of my head. These preparations were constantly interrupted by my fiancé, who was nervous as the

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conventional bridegroom, and kept telephoning me every few minutes.

The wedding was scheduled to take place at eleven o'clock. Mama, in a lovely embroidered Chinese robe, and I in my foreign bridal finery, left the hotel alone together. The ministers to Belgium and Spain, their diplomatic uniforms aglitter with gold braid, met us at the Legation door and led us to an ante-room where we waited until the guests had assembled. Then Minister Wei offered me his arm and escorted me into the drawing room. The military attaché, holding a Chinese scroll in his hand, stood in a window niche, my husband-to-be in front of him. Wellington and I bowed to each other, then stood side by side during the half-hour ceremony. Someone brought my diamond wedding ring on a red velvet cushion, and after Wellington had placed it on my finger the ceremony was over.

We drank champagne, posed for photographs. My husband had been married in a morning coat instead of his diplomatic uniform, so I cut our wedding cake with Minister Wei's sword. After a luncheon at the hotel given by my husband for the forty-odd wedding guests, he broke the astonishing news that we were leaving for Geneva on the night train. The Assembly of the League of Nations was to have its first official opening the following day, and as head of the Chinese delegation, it was imperative that he be there.

I changed from my bridal gown into a negligée, but instead of being alone with my husband, we spent the afternoon working hard with his secretary. Our presents were still to be opened, personal friends to be thanked, and I had to supervise my packing before dressing for the early dinner which was being given in our honor at the Chinese Legation. I felt strange and very lonely. My protected childhood lay behind me, and my future, I dimly realized, was not to be

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as easily glamorous as I had imagined. But when I put on my white satin evening gown with its sweeping train, I felt so dignified that life suddenly became worth living. My husband and I drove to the Legation in state, with Mama, the Chinese minister to Spain and Madame Tai trailing in another car. There were at least fifty dinner guests, and the meal wound through a series of elaborate courses with bird's-nest soup and chow mein to give it patriotic flavor. Being newly married, my husband and I were seated side by side while the host and hostess were opposite. The dinner was progressing on a formal note when someone addressed some half-humorous remark to me. I started to giggle, my giggle developed into a gale of laughter, and the more I tried to control myself the harder I laughed. I held my napkin in front of my mouth, then hid behind my ostrich fan. Mama saw me, and began to laugh too. Soon my husband was laughing. All attention was focused on us and the laughter proved infectious, spreading uncontrollably like wild-fire around the table. Formality evaporated, dignified guests wiped their streaming eyes. My sides began to ache unbearably, and when it seemed as if I could stand the agony no longer my husband looked at his watch, pushed back his chair, and announced that we must return to the hotel to change into our traveling clothes.

Mama accompanied us to Geneva. She traveled in a separate sleeping car with half a dozen secretaries and an indescribable tangle of typewriters, despatch cases, valises, books and stacks of papers. We had a private sleeping car, decorated in blue and gold, with a dining room and drawing room as well as our bedroom. It was the first time we had been alone together since Annapolis. We were both utterly exhausted. The next morning when I awoke, the train was nearing Geneva. My husband, who was up and dressed,

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begged me to hurry as all the officials as well as the entire Chinese delegation to the League would be on the platform to meet us. I barely had time to finish powdering my nose when we drew into the station. The delegates, impeccable in frock coats and shiny top hats, lined up and shook hands with me. One made a flattering little speech and placed in my arms a staggering bouquet of red roses. After the introductions were finished I turned around and saw Mama. She was almost hidden behind a sheaf of roses, but through them I caught a glimpse of her face all crinkled with happiness.

My husband and I drove off to the Beau Rivage Hotel by ourselves, Mama following in solitary grandeur. At the door of our apartment a squad of secretaries greeted us. With a few hasty apologies to me, they surrounded my husband and rushed him away. I was left standing forlornly in the center of our large drawing room beside our piled-up luggage. But Mama's rooms were on the floor below, which was a comforting thought. On the first day of my married life I lunched alone with my mother.

(11.)

Wellington Koo

As a young girl lulled in extraordinary luxury on an exotic island, I had sat in the shade of a *wairingen* tree and half listened while Miss Jones had droned on about the decline of the Manchus, the waning influence of old-school Mandarins, and the creation of a bright new republic. She tried to drill into my lazy head that I was a definite part of these changes, that somehow they affected all of us—Papa, Mama, me and even my most distant relations. I was too much of an egoist to care, and on visits to Shanghai, Amoy and other parts of China could notice no difference between old and new regimes. My country's tangled politics failed to pique my interest, and I still preferred Papa's

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Chinese proverbs to Miss Jones' lessons in modern history. China remained to me the Middle Kingdom where an emperor sat securely on a Dragon Throne surrounded by shrivel-faced eunuchs, kow-towing vassals and beautiful concubines. While I was growing up in this spoiled, unthinking way my husband-to-be, half a generation older than I, was already actively engaged in China's desperate struggle for national unity. How sharply opposed were our respective upbringings, how widely separated were Wellington's motivations from my own!

Conservatism, patriotism and economy of living were bred in the marrow of Wellington Koo. He was born in 1888, a critical period in our country's history. During the previous half century, successive Western nations had gradually penetrated China's self-imposed isolation, had heaped humiliation on our powerless empire. Arrogant foreign merchants backed by troops arbitrarily helped themselves to whatever concessions they pleased. China was forced into many disastrous wars. Their tragic consequences were a series of unequal treaties which until recently remained in force.

If China was to be saved from foreign partition the decaying Manchu regime must be replaced by a modern democracy. Reform was inevitable, and the intellectual Chinese, whose nationalism had been submerged in the lesser loyalties of province and guild, arose in a surge of almost fanatical patriotism. Thousands of young men vowed to dedicate their lives to creating a new era for their country. It was important for them to absorb the occidental ideas and ways necessary for China's modernization. Fired with the strongest patriotic ambitions, they left home to study in Europe, Japan and America. Wellington was one of these.

His father, originally a business man, later continued his career in public service. He held many important posts and

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ended an active life as President of the Bank of Communications. There were three sons and two daughters, who grew up in the Chinese section of Shanghai, and later moved to a fine house in the International Settlement. My capable mother-in-law attended to the household details and firmly ruled a drove of girl attendants and servants. She was a dear old lady when I finally met her, with tiny bound feet usual to women of quality in her generation. She knew little of the world outside her circumscribed orbit, and had never ventured as far afield as Peking. Her summers were spent in Kiating, an hour's journey from Shanghai up the Yangtse River, where the Koo family owned property. Their other main property was in Soo Chow, known as the Venice of China, famous for its picturesque canals and beautiful women. Long before I met Wellington his father had died, and the family estates were managed by the eldest son. Educated as he was in the finest Chinese tradition, I found the latter almost too courteous, but he made the most graceful bows I have ever seen.

At an early age Wellington and his second brother were sent to St. John's College, an American missionary school in Shanghai. The atmosphere was puritanical and there were few diversions to offset the poor food and cheerless rooms, icy cold in winter. Discipline was so spartan that the second brother soon dropped out, but Wellington, determined to conquer every obstacle, stayed on until he was sixteen. He was a brilliant student, and drove himself relentlessly, determined to absorb learning quickly, impatient for the day when he could serve his country.

In 1904 Wellington was sent by his father to the United States. His father was unperturbed as he bid his youngest boy farewell, and prophesied reassuringly to his wife, "We need never worry over this son." Wellington sailed alone

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across the Pacific to a strange land where he knew no one. After a year in preparatory school he entered Columbia University. In his seven years there, Wellington annexed three degrees and was starred as one of Columbia's most brilliant students. More important even than his scholastic record was his ability to make friends. As a freshman he had arrived unheralded but in a remarkably short time everyone seemed to know him. He was on his house track team, joined in every kind of student activity and was elected editor-in-chief of the *Columbia Spectator*—a surprising achievement for a young Chinese. He returned to China for one summer vacation, but for the rest of the time lived in New York on a scanty allowance which barely provided for the simplest necessities. His personal comfort must have been negligible and he acquired a boarding house taste in food which I still tease him about.

While Wellington was studying in the West his country was laboring through one of the most momentous crises of her three thousand years of history. In the autumn of 1911 China awoke, shook off the Manchu yoke and started a brave new year as a republic. The passing of the Manchus occasioned small regret to anyone except their paid followers. They were an alien people who had swept down from the north and seized control of China when the once powerful Ming dynasty had become enfeebled and vitiated. Their unpopular power survived for three centuries solely because of two magnificent emperors, Kang H'si and Ch'ien Lung, each of whom had ruled for sixty successful years. With the death in 1798 of Ch'ien Lung the Manchus started their slow decline. Incompetent emperors and a succession of child rulers under the corrupt regency of capricious empresses plunged them headlong into decadence. Finally in 1911 the

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Dynasty collapsed with the abdication of the Boy Emperor, Hsuan-tung.

The first provisional president of the Republic was Dr. Sun Yat-sen, whose dream had always been to make the Chinese a sovereign people. More than any individual he had been responsible for the revolution. In the interests of national unity Dr. Sun resigned almost immediately in favor of General Yuan Shih-kai, who for over a quarter of a century had been one of China's most powerful Peking ministers. He had been a courageous commander against the Japanese in Korea, and when Germany seized the province of Shantung the bewildered Manchus had given Yuan the task of modernizing the imperial army. Now, supported by a military machine, Yuan Shih-kai became ruler of the country.

Chinese patriotism, outlawed under the Manchus, came into its own once the Republic had been definitely established. Hundreds of students rushed home, eager to try out their newly acquired knowledge. Among them was Wellington who had been picked for the position of English secretary to the President. Subsequently, upon resignation of the cabinet, he was appointed Secretary to the Foreign Ministry, and later Counsellor.

During the succeeding years Wellington played a part in many important negotiations. His most conspicuous accomplishments concerned the infamous Twenty-One Demands made on China by Japan while Europe was too absorbed in the first World War to pay attention. Wellington's skill was instrumental in securing a more acceptable compromise for China. This early success was indicative of Wellington's lifelong point of view; that China should above all resist any infringement on her political sovereignty and territorial integrity.

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Late in 1915, at the age of twenty-seven, he was appointed Minister to Mexico. But en route to his post, he was switched to an infinitely more impressive position in Washington, where he became the youngest minister ever accredited to the United States. After the first World War, China, an Ally, despatched a delegation to the Paris Peace Conference. Wellington was nominated one of the Chinese plenipotentiaries of the delegation. When the League of Nations was created, he was made head of the Chinese delegation to the First Assembly. It was during these youthful triumphs that we met, became engaged and married.

(12.)

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I knew next to nothing about the League of Nations but in an atmosphere so concentrated with political activity it was impossible not to absorb what was going on. Over night prim Geneva was awlirl with a polyglot population which contrasted oddly with the staid Swiss. Representatives from all the member countries had flocked there for the official curtain-raising, and almost every delegate had brought along his family as well as a train of secretaries, servants and special advisors. Adding to the racial hodge-podge were lobbyists from the half dozen countries seeking admission to the League—lanky Albanians, bullet-headed Bulgarians, Hungarians, Mexicans, and Arabs in flowing *jellebas* jostled

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each other in cafes, sipping coffee and talking in hushed monotones as if they were afraid to be overheard.

The formal opening of the Assembly was staged dramatically on November Fifteenth, 1920. The sun was warm and the bells of Geneva rang out cheerily as the delegates wound in long procession through tidy avenues lined with cheering crowds. Their wives followed in separate cars. Mama and I sat side by side. She was tremulous with happiness at my being part of this pomp and circumstance, and nothing could convince her that the cheers were not all for me. As long as we stayed in Geneva Mama's chief dissipation was a daily cable to Papa crowing over what she termed my "triumphant" new life and never omitting a dig about his refusal to consent to my marriage.

After the excitement of the opening day the delegates settled down to work. I hardly saw my husband except at formal luncheons and dinners. His days were filled with an endless series of conferences and a perpetual struggle to find time to prepare his speeches. In the evenings, just before dinner, he was busied with the important task of writing a full account of the day's events, which had to be cabled to the government at Peking. Though I did not realize it at the time, half of the delegates' work was done at a fantastic series of luncheons, dinners and receptions which punctuated our days and nights. Each delegation tried to outshine the others in the grandeur of its entertainments, and the competition was exhausting.

Wellington was a member of the Committee on Mandates and Armaments and naturally was most closely associated with his fellow committeemen, who included Hjalmar Branting of Sweden, the chairman; Sir Robert Cecil, Lord Salisbury's son, Chief Delegate from South Africa; Viscount Ishii of Japan; Edouard Benes, then brand-new Czechoslovakia's

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Foreign Minister ; Dr. Fridjof Nansen, the Norwegian Arctic explorer, and Ignace Paderewski of Poland. The latter two and their wives soon became my personal favorites.

Madame Nansen, tall, elegant and forbidding, was definitely not in her first youth, and I was surprised when in a burst of friendliness she confided to me that she too was on her honeymoon. Years before, soon after her marriage to an artist, she had met and fallen desperately in love with Dr. Nansen. She waited thirty patient years until the first Mrs. Nansen died, then divorced her husband and married the elderly explorer. At a dinner or reception, if the Doctor was out of sight she would become quite obviously jealous and make no attempt to take part in the conversation around her. After waiting so many years for her happiness she begrudged even a moment's separation, and lived in constant dread that he would leave her and go exploring again.

Dr. Nansen had rare fascination. A shaggy Viking, he started Arctic exploration in his early twenties and when only thirty, pushed within two hundred and fifty miles of the North Pole, farther north than any man had ventured at that time. He varied exploration with diplomacy, and after Norway had separated from Sweden, became the new country's first minister to England. During the last years of the war he devoted all his energies to alleviating the suffering among prisoners of war in Russia. The horrors he had witnessed became such an obsession that I was warned he talked of little else. Fortunately, he only regaled me with the pleasanter aspects of his travels and would reminisce most amusingly about his ice-bound winters, when he had subsisted solely on a diet of walruses, bears, and whales. "Whale meat," he would thunder at me, "is the greatest delicacy in the world—far better than any of the fancy dishes at these interminable banquets."

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Mr. Arthur Balfour, who was still Britain's Foreign Minister, became one of our most valued friends. He took a really fatherly interest in me, and I always felt completely at ease with him. He was remarkably vigorous, and though he must have been over seventy, he often played tennis in the afternoons. He cordially disliked banquets and often asked my husband and me to lunch quite alone with him in his private sitting room. He was charming, restful and an oasis of peace during these hectic nights and days. When we met the following year in Washington at the Naval Disarmament Conference, he continued to be a most sympathetic friend. He and the Honorable Charles Evans Hughes, Secretary of State, were of the greatest value in helping the Chinese Delegation negotiate with Japan the treaty by which the province of Shantung was returned to China.

In 1920, China's relations with Japan were officially cordial. But actually the Chinese delegates never became intimate with the Japanese, and though outwardly friendly, we instinctively felt on guard. The leaders of the Japanese delegation were two extremely clever men, Viscount Ishii, Ambassador to France, and Baron Hayashi who was stationed in London. Baron Hayashi, a bachelor, apparently enjoyed my company and made a point of seeking me out. Our conversations were lighthearted, but Baron Hayashi's compliments, which sometimes seemed a trifle ambiguous, secretly used to infuriate me. "You know your husband is not really appreciated," he remarked with irritating frequency. "He is at least twenty years ahead of the present times in China, and you, also, are much too modern for your country." I would smile in a noncommittal fashion, never permitting emotion to ruffle my newly acquired poise.

René Viviani was the most remarkable of all the fluent orators at Geneva. His voice had a pleasing quality and his

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speeches were delivered in the most beautiful French. As an after-dinner speaker, he was supreme. I knew nothing of politics, yet was completely fascinated when he spoke on subjects which to me, at least, were entirely obscure. One day, after an especially impassioned oration, he came driving with us. I could not resist asking him how he managed to work up to such a vivid emotional climax. He looked at me a moment, as if wondering if he could trust me. "Madame," he said, "It's a strange fact, but once I have made my speech, I don't remember a word I've uttered."

Brilliant Ignace Paderewski, so little the professional politician, was sweet and kindly towards everyone. On a few rare evenings he and his motherly wife dined in our sitting room. The maestro would chat cosily for a while of his Polish farm where he raised white chickens. Later, with exquisite quietness he would play the piano just for the four of us. As Premier and Foreign Minister of Poland, he had piloted his newly organized country through its most critical year. Only four months before, the Bolshevik troops had almost captured Warsaw, and it was less than a month since a peace treaty had been signed at Riga. Despite these political difficulties, Poland's chief delegate and his wife remained remarkably unruffled. They entertained elaborately, gave the handsomest ball of the session, and by successful social activity made Polish prestige synonymous with the name Paderewski.

Though I saw very little of my husband while we were in Geneva, it did not take me long to realize that his prophecy had come true and that I had fallen in love with him. His patience had made it inevitable, for never had I imagined any man could be so unfailingly gentle. My ignorance of

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political and diplomatic matters must have been a constant irritant, especially to someone as harassed and tired as Wellington. He never taxed me by trying to explain either politics or diplomacy, but left me to my own devices, presuming that I had sufficient wit to catch on in my own fashion.

Everything was new and exciting. Until my arrival at Geneva I had never been to a real European dinner, or even a luncheon, and here I was, still a girl in my teens, suddenly called upon as the wife of the head of the Chinese Delegation to entertain and be entertained by the most brilliant personalities in post-war Europe. In my blissful ignorance I had first supposed that entertaining was easy and that dinner parties were conjured out of the air—but this was before I had attempted to give one of my own.

We had a beautiful corner suite in the hotel overlooking the lake. The drawing room's generous proportions were quite suitable for our official parties, which seldom included more than thirty guests. My early success was almost entirely due to the unfailing efforts of my husband's secretary. Mr. Yang was a born diplomat, with protocol at his finger tips. When we decided to entertain, he would suggest which guests would be most congenial, and when the acceptances were received he arranged the seating. While I gazed dutifully at his handiwork he would explain who the guests were, their individual preferences and how proper seating could assure for all a most agreeable time. He unravelled the complications of protocol in a most intriguing manner, and I thoroughly enjoyed his tutelage. Being the essence of tact, he presented the plan for my husband's final approval with the polite fib that it had been prepared by Madame.

The only detail of our parties for which I could claim full credit was the table decoration. I took the most tremendous

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pains, using only violets, and never mixing them with other flowers. As violet was my favorite color, I made a point of always wearing a dress to match.

My foreign clothes occasionally embarrassed me. The French delegation gave a dinner in our honor one evening, and I wore an especially low-cut evening gown which had just arrived from Paris. Slightly self-conscious about my backless dress, I hugged a fur stole tight around my shoulders throughout the dinner. Afterwards, Madame Viviani, who had beautiful gray hair and was always the acme of smartness, said to me, "Aren't you too warm with that fur around you?" and when I replied, "I am only keeping my fur on because my dress is too décolleté," she snatched it away with, "Nonsense, child! Don't stay bunched up in furs, show your lovely dress!" When Wellington joined us, Madame Paderewska, who was next to Madame Viviani, turned to him: "We have undressed your wife," she said. Though my husband smiled, I could see by his eyes that he greatly disapproved of my bare back. The next time I wore the gown I was careful to have the décolletage tempered with tulle.

I was astonished to find that in Europe it was not the younger men who made love, but rather the middle aged and elderly. They were surprisingly lacking in subtlety, and did not seem to mind making themselves ridiculous. The attentions of these stout old men annoyed me intensely. One evening a most persistent elderly admirer caught up with me after a relentless pursuit. He smilingly asked me if the Chinese made love to women in the same fashion as Europeans. "I am sure the young men do, but not the old," I replied witheringly. He was not in the least squelched, and while I edged nearer my husband he started on a new tack. "How do you say 'I love you' in Chinese?" he asked. I turned swiftly

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to my husband, "Wellington, His Excellency wishes to know how you say 'I love you' in Chinese!" I caught a fleeting glimpse of His Excellency's face—and of Wellington's—both were frozen stiff with surprise, and before either could think of a reply I turned and ran.

(13.)

Three Feathers

We left Geneva shortly before the New Year and went directly to London, engaging rooms at Claridge's Hotel. Mama had invited us to stay temporarily in Wimbledon, but the six-mile drive through heavy traffic made her house too inconvenient. The Chinese Legation had not as yet been vacated by our predecessors, the Alfred Szes. They had been in London for many years and their transfer to Washington had coincided with Wellington's appointment to London.

The Legation on Portland Place had been purchased many years before by the Manchu government. It was a forbidding old house and I saw at once that an extensive job of renova-

Three Feathers

tion was ahead of me. I indulged immediately in a frenzy of cleaning, painting and decoration.

I kept on shopping furiously, so Wellington took pains to explain that the Chinese government would not want to pay for all my fancy furnishings. "Oh, Papa will give us my new things!" I replied jauntily. Diplomatic life was uncertain, my husband continued seriously, he had no idea how long he might remain in London. Even if Papa did foot the bills, it was not necessary to spend too much money on a house which we might occupy for only a few months.

I refused to consider such a dire possibility. "If we are transferred we can always take this stuff along with us," I countered cheerily, for it never entered my head that curtains and carpets are made to fit individual rooms.

After the decorating was completed I made a final extravagant gesture and purchased some handsome old Italian furniture for the bedroom. The massive beds were equipped with the latest thing in box springs and soft mattresses and when these arrived my husband seemed to think them most unnecessary.

During this second month of our marriage my husband was in a constant state of stunned amazement. He had never come in intimate contact with a pampered, extravagant creature like myself; the women in his family had been brought up conventionally to stay at home, economically busying themselves with household affairs. Wellington, working unceasingly since boyhood, lacked time and inclination for frivolous people and found any kind of display distasteful. But he turned out to be a perfect angel, and instead of imposing his standards on me tuned his scale of living to mine.

When it came time to move into the Legation I was quite satisfied with the small miracle I had wrought. The old house

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was cheerful, livable, and made a handsome setting for the parties I planned to give.

There was one room in the Legation that I was careful to leave as I found it. This was a small chamber on the fourth floor, once heavily barred and padlocked, which back in 1898 had been Dr. Sun Yat-sen's prison. He had come to London after a trip through the United States, and though his revolutionary activities had been discreet, the Manchu government had gotten wind of them. He had hardly set foot in London when he was kidnapped on the street in broad daylight and spirited away to the Chinese Legation. The abduction was so cleverly managed that Dr. Sun disappeared completely, as if he had dissolved into a London fog. The Manchu government's plan was to smuggle Dr. Sun out of England and back to China where he would have to stand trial for high treason. The only possible verdict would have been decapitation, and if Dr. Sun had not made a romantic escape from his improvised dungeon in the Legation, a Manchu emperor might still be ruling the Dragon Throne. On his way from China to the United States, Dr. Sun stopped off in Honolulu for a few days. There, quite accidentally, he had run into Sir James Cantlie, who had been one of his professors at the British Medical School in Hong Kong. Their meeting was providential, for Sir James was en route to England via America, and when his former pupil failed to keep a London rendezvous Sir James, discovering Dr. Sun's whereabouts, effected his release.

Sir James must have been almost eighty when he came to live in the Legation. He was a bent old man, and quite deaf, but retained a remarkable gusto for living. He claimed that red meat and whiskey kept him in perfect health, and so Wellington, who is practically a vegetarian and dislikes strong liquors, became an object of considerable concern to

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Sir James. "You'll never be really strong," he would urge, "until you eat more red meat and drink a glass or two of whiskey every day."

I had been so busy rejuvenating our Legation that I had met few people. My only friend was the Princess of Monaco, who took the keenest pleasure in launching me on my new career. She was short, fat and invariably wore a string of marble-sized pearls so tightly clasped that they appeared to be imbedded in her neck. She was then in her sixties and had occupied for many years the same suite of rooms at Claridge's, where she babied three badly spoiled Pekinese who had their own special maid. The princess had a definite weakness for Italians; next in favor were uncelebrated artists, poets and musicians. She was a generous patroness and an unfailing provider of delicious free meals. Being bright as well as kindly, the distinguished and the riff-raff brushed shoulders in her crowded apartment. Her dinners were constant surprises, for it was a toss-up whether your partner would be some long-haired musician or the most glittering cabinet minister.

The princess was devoted to me and anxious for my success in London. I knew so little of European habits and was so eager to learn that I must have been fun to teach. One of Wellington's first duties as minister was to present his credentials to Their Majesties King George V and Queen Mary. I turned to the princess for advice, and she coached me on presentation etiquette; a curtsy on entering the room, another half way to the queen and a third as the queen shook hands with me. Then the princess warned me never to question royalty, to answer only when spoken to, and always to be equipped with elbow-length white kid gloves.

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The afternoon of our presentation, the Master of Ceremonies at Buckingham Palace came to fetch us at the Legation. We were to be presented separately, he told us. I was to curtsy to Her Majesty in one room while Wellington offered his credentials to His Majesty in another. My husband wore his diplomatic uniform, and I had on a floor-length afternoon dress and the longest white kid gloves to be found in London. When we reached the Palace I was so perturbed about my curtsies that I noticed little except the delicious floral perfume which filled the air.

I walked into a large drawing room alone. Her Majesty was standing far away, across what seemed to be acres of slippery parquet. I moved slowly, horrified of a fall and numbly wondering whether my knees wobbled as I curtsied.

Finally I reached the other side safely. Her Majesty was dressed in cream-colored lace and from the waist up appeared to be stiffly encased in pearls. Her kid gloves were even longer than mine. She was superlatively regal and so obviously set apart from ordinary human beings that conversation was extremely difficult. When tea was served, His Majesty and my husband joined the queen, her ladies-in-waiting and myself. The atmosphere immediately became less formal, for the king had a charming, friendly manner and I became quite at ease. His Majesty told my husband about his pleasure in Chinese collections, and was so extraordinarily well informed on Chinese art that I felt embarrassingly ignorant. After tea we were signalled that the audience was over, and with creditable skill I backed out of the room, executing three tidy little curtsies on the way. When I reached the door I was faint with apprehension, for I had forgotten to tell Wellington of this final manoeuvre. Fortunately, just as he was about to head out of Their Majesties' presence, he saw me and quickly reversed his position.

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The opening party of my first London social season was an evening reception given by Lord and Lady Astor in honor of the Crown Prince of Japan, who is now emperor. The occasion was especially exciting to me, because I wore my new tiara which Papa had bought at Cartier's. That evening I was presented to United States Ambassador Harvey and Mrs. Harvey, who were later to become my great friends. Colonel Harvey and his wife, then well on in years, were sympathetic souls, most cordial towards both China and the Chinese. I immediately confided my lack of experience to Mrs. Harvey and told her how difficult it was for me to remember European names, to know who was who and to strike a happy medium between being too distant or too friendly to other members of the diplomatic corps. I was the junior in rank as well as in age, for precedence is gauged by seniority and we were the most recently appointed. I had to exercise great care to avoid antagonizing the senior diplomats and their wives, who were exceedingly jealous of their prerogatives. I poured out all my problems to Mrs. Harvey, never realizing that she too might be experiencing the same difficulties. "But I'm in the same boat," she said cosily, "I've never been in diplomatic life before, and I had to learn everything right from the beginning." Mrs. Harvey, who had never imagined meeting royalty, much less being called upon to entertain them in her own house, had a sense of humor about her ambassadorial responsibilities. She described with great vividness her utter confusion at one of the first official dinners she attended when she found herself sitting next to the Duke of Connaught. Her embarrassment was such that she was completely tongue-tied until the meal was nearly over.

Shortly after our first meeting Ambassador and Mrs. Harvey gave a luncheon in our honor. I made mental notes

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of her technique as hostess. Though rectangular tables were most often used at large luncheons and dinners, the Harveys' dining room table was round, which somehow managed to make the meal less formal. Mrs. Harvey did not follow the strictest protocol and we were seated on the right of our host and hostess. A British duke and duchess were among the guests and in keeping with English etiquette, a duke precedes a minister. Oddly enough a maharajah is rated ahead of a duke but an ambassador, who is the representative of his king or president, precedes them both. Mrs. Harvey confessed that the British prime minister was her greatest seating problem. The protocol had advised her to seat him after ambassadors, ministers, maharajahs and dukes—which she considered far below Lloyd George's true deserts.

Even with Mrs. Harvey's encouragement it was some time before I felt confident enough to attempt important entertaining. As a practical preliminary, I purchased Emily Price Post's *Book of Etiquette*, and was terribly disappointed when a search through its pages revealed no helpful hints to a young, uninitiated Chinese ministress giving her first dinner for royalty.

The season swept on inevitably. We went to the royal garden parties at Buckingham Palace, and we attended tedious unveilings; we motored to Ascot and had seats in the royal enclosure. All these social activities were much the same, but I can never forget the near calamity of my second meeting with Queen Mary. We had been present at the opening of Victoria Albert Dock, following Their Majesties' launch on a waterfront tour lasting until late in the afternoon. Tired and hungry, I hurried to the handsomely decorated buffet tent. I was just downing my third marron glacé when I was horrified to see Queen Mary walking rapidly in my direction. The marron was still in my mouth, there

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was no polite way to dispose of it, so while curtseying I ducked my brimmed hat for the fraction of a second and gulped down the offending fruit. My throat ached for hours and it was years before I could touch a marron glacé!

We drove home in my new Rolls Royce. It was painted battleship gray, and I thought the chauffeur and footman very smart in their matching liveries. The special body, which Mama had insisted on, featured such unusually large windows that my friends soon nicknamed it the "Crystal Palace." I enjoyed the drive home, as I loved the London crowds; they were so unaffectedly demonstrative and cheered on the slightest provocation. We were part and parcel of the royal pageant, and as we passed they shouted "Long live China!" I felt like a queen; when traffic stopped a crowd inevitably gathered around the "Crystal Palace," pressing their noses to the windows and commenting on us as unconcernedly as if we were an exhibit in Mme. Tussaud's wax-works. "Isn't she sweet?" "Isn't she a darling?" they would say—and in my delight I threw them kisses, a proceeding which my husband considered highly undignified.

It was 1921 and no court balls had been given since the World War, so the announcement that Their Majesties the King and Queen of the Belgians were to be honored at Buckingham Palace caused a furore of excitement in social London. I ordered instantly a magnificent ball gown from Worth, but Wellington Koo's sartorial problems were not so easily settled. This was his first experience at a court ball and he was puzzled as to what might be appropriate. I immediately called on Mrs. Harvey to find out what her husband intended to wear. Mrs. Harvey was equally perplexed, as the United States had no diplomatic uniform, but she hoped eventually to coax the ambassador into satin knee-

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breeches. But her coaxing proved vain and Ambassador Harvey's refusal to appear in anything more exotic than a dress suit resulted in an amusing controversy which delighted the American press. I was too inexperienced to know that the British department of protocol could have solved the problem immediately. So I consulted my husband's tailor, who I discovered was blasé about dressing diplomats. The tailor decreed white broadcloth knee-breeches, silk stockings and buckled shoes. On the evening of the ball it was comparatively simple for me to be hooked into a gold lamé gown, but it took both time and patience to insert Wellington into his breeches, wind around his waist the eight yards of gold cloth girdle which anchored his mother-of-pearl handled sword, hook up his tightly fitting uniform, tuck a scarlet ribbon across his chest, pin on the Order of the Bountiful Crop and the Order of Merit—and hand him his plumed hat.

Half of London and its suburbs seemed to have crowded around Buckingham Palace to catch a fleeting glimpse of celebrities. Traffic had been routed with the usual British efficiency and the diplomatic corps had a special route reserved through the London streets for its own use. We also had a special entrance into the Palace. We walked through thickly carpeted halls to the ballroom where the entire diplomatic corps had seats reserved on a stand built close to the royal dais. Once we reached our seats, we sat there too entranced to speak. A military band played at each end of the mammoth ballroom whose walls were massed almost to the ceiling with pink flowers. The ball was the first great elegant fête given since the war, and consequently the women's gowns beggared description and their jewels gleamed in the light of a thousand candles set in crystal candelabras. For once the twentieth-century male had his moment of glory. Medals flashed on every chest, scarlet uniforms were burdened with

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gold braid and boots were burnished bright as mirrors. Indian potentates, tuniced in shining brocades, their dark faces topped by aigretted turbans, strutted slowly through the crowds.

At the stroke of ten the bands struck up "God Save the King," and King George appeared with Queen Elizabeth on his arm while the soldierly King of the Belgians offered his arm to Queen Mary. Thus paired, they moved slowly towards the royal dais, where they stood before their four thrones, stiffly immobile, waiting for their release in the final chord of the national anthem. Backed by a resplendent array of lesser royalty the two kings and their queens serenely faced the breathlessly crowded ballroom—King Albert handsomely erect, Queen Elizabeth unaffectedly at ease, King George grave but seeming to enjoy his rôle. Yet all paled into insignificance besides the dazzling magnificence of Queen Mary. She glittered from the hem of her diamante studded gown to the tip of her crown where the Koh-i-noor flashed in lone triumph. With each breath, each movement of Queen Mary's body, tiny rainbows blazed from the facets of her diamond dog-collar, then darted down the rows of brilliants, strung across her regal bosom. In her white and glistening perfection she was more than a queen—she was the living symbol of Britain's glory.

We sat on our stand watching the royal dais and the couples whirling by in the rhythm of a fox-trot. The music was marvelous, but Wellington did not wish me to join the dancers. Suddenly, the "Gold Sticks," waving their batons impressively, cleared the floor. There was a murmur of excitement—was the queen going to dance? All eyes were riveted on Queen Mary as she rose from her throne and was handed to the dance floor by a slim, dark young man whom nobody seemed to know. The bands crashed into the newest,

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gayest fox-trot, the queen began to dance. With firm, sure steps the queen and her partner launched into a dignified waltz. Turning at precise intervals, they circled the ball-room.

Years afterwards, at the 1937 Nine Power Conference at Brussels, I met the queen's dancing partner. He had been chamberlain to the Queen of the Belgians, during the royal visit. He said quite seriously that though sixteen years had elapsed, he still broke into a sweat of terror when he remembered the famous dance. One false step and his career would have been ruined, his country plunged into an embarrassing international situation!

The queen's dance won a real victory for me. "If the Queen of England may trip the light fantastic," I reminded Wellington teasingly, "then there is no reason why I can't, too." Without waiting for reply I whirled away, but I had scarcely circled the room when the band struck up the supper march. With Their Majesties heading the procession we paraded two by two between scarlet velvet ropes to the supper room. Members of the royal family followed, then came British dukes and duchesses, and lastly, ambassadors, ministers and their wives. The other guests pressed close to the ropes, watching the fortunate ones who were invited to the royal repast. As I passed on the arm of my escort, I could not repress a thrill of delight, for there, looking at me enviously from the wrong side of the rope, was a titled lady who until now had treated me with considerable condescension. You may be sure that I smiled at her with all the charm I could muster.

The supper room at Buckingham Palace was an unforgettable sight. Here displayed for our enjoyment was the pomp and wealth of an earlier, more lavish era, which has survived only at the Court of St. James. Massed ceiling-

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high on shelves was the state gold plate, ornate and wonderful to behold. It had been brought especially from the Tower of London for the occasion and was valued at more than ten million dollars. The incredible buffet supper was served completely on solid gold to hundreds of guests by a phalanx of be-wigged footmen in knee-breeches. Never, even in the dreams of the most imaginative gourmet, could such a variety of delicacies have been conceived but I was too tense to eat anything except a few delicious strawberries, each one buried deep beneath a miniature mountain of Devonshire cream. I felt that this indeed must be heaven. For here was I actually in Buckingham Palace, being plied with exquisite foods and wines, surrounded by beautiful women and men in the most exciting uniforms, and allowed to mingle almost casually with the crowned heads of Great Britain and Belgium. It was, I thought, extraordinarily good to be alive.

At four o'clock we returned from the ball, yet neither of us was sleepy and for a long time we talked over the evening. My husband must have been satisfied with both my appearance and conduct for just before I went to bed he said abruptly, "You and I really make a very fine team." I was immensely flattered, for by now I understood Wellington well enough to know that this was the highest praise.

(14.)

Washington Conference

During the summer of 1921 Wellington was chosen as a delegate to the Nine Power Disarmament Conference, which was to be held in America early in November. Out of courtesy to Dr. Sze, then installed as Minister in Washington, my husband preferred to go as second delegate while Dr. C. H. Wang, one of China's foremost statesmen, was the third. Its primary purpose was to establish a naval balance of power between United States, Great Britain and Japan, and at the same time to straighten out other international entanglements in the Far East.

Our baby was to be born in February, and as my husband had no way of knowing how long the Conference might last,

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he wanted me to remain quietly in England. The idea of a static stay in London while Wellington was enjoying life in Washington did not appeal to me, and I insisted on accompanying him. We sailed on the *Olympic* late in October, accompanied by Wang, Wellington's valet, my English maid, and Pao-Pei, my tiny sable-colored Pekinese.

Traveling on the *Olympic* were various impressive personages, all bound for the Conference. The most congenial were the first lord of the British Admiralty, Lord Lee of Fareham, and his wife. I had the greatest admiration for Lady Lee, and demurred when she insisted that I precede her into dinner.

Photographers and reporters swarmed onto the *Olympic* when we reached Quarantine. I was rushed to the deck, and though for obvious reasons, I was reluctant to be photographed, I finally succumbed to the cameraman's blandishments. By keeping Pao-Pei in my arms, and carefully manoeuvring a large muff, I managed successfully to camouflage my figure. We were escorted from pier to hotel in true American fashion by four motorcycle policemen who kept their sirens screaming as we dodged through traffic. I regretted that Mama was not with us as she would have loved the pomp and circumstance.

After an official reception in Washington we were driven to a large private house on Massachusetts Avenue which the Chinese government had leased from Mrs. F. Berger Moran. Luckily, we were allotted a handsome suite of rooms, for the house was packed with delegates; including Dr. C. H. Wang who had crossed on the *Olympic* with us, Mr. M. T. Liang, Admiral Tsai Ting-kan, and Mr. Chao Tze-chi, three veteran statesmen. Our secretary general was Dr. Philip Tyau, whose wife was English, while Dr. U. Y. Yen, who years later was to become my sister's second husband, took charge of the

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commissary. Our house was most curiously staffed. There were white maids, Negro maids, an English butler, an Italian footman and a fat Irish cook who made lovely waffles and taught me to like American food. They were all managed by an indefatigable housekeeper pretty enough to be in Hollywood. I regarded the menservants with great interest when my maid reported that they came to work each morning driving their own cars.

There was an endless round of entertainment. My whole social programme was arranged for me, and I went where I was told without asking questions. It was Indian Summer, a term I had never heard before, and in the heat I trailed from one tea party to another.

Hundreds of women crowded around the tea tables, but few men were brave enough to put in an appearance, and as the parties inevitably overlapped, I saw the same faces repeatedly during the afternoon. In that first week I must have been introduced to a thousand women and have drunk several dozen glasses of grape juice each afternoon.

Wellington had known the Hardings quite well during his former Washington days. From my first meeting the President's immaculate clothes and chivalrous manners impressed me deeply. Mrs. Harding often invited me to accompany her to afternoon concerts. She was a kindly little person whose most distinguishing characteristic was her tight black velvet neckband. She arranged for us to meet the Calvin Coolidges at tea. For the occasion I wore a black velvet dress and draped several silver foxes about my person to achieve a slimming effect, but after ten minutes in the Coolidges' hotel apartment, my vanity almost proved my undoing. Every window was hermetically sealed, and I nearly fainted from the heat. Svelte and handsome, Mrs. Coolidge proved a most

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gracious conversationalist. I found her intelligent and broad-minded.

President and Mrs. Harding gave a dinner in honor of the chief delegates and their wives. After Buckingham Palace, the White House appeared unostentatious, but I was acutely conscious of its great dignity. The corridors which we paraded through on our way to dinner were lined with soldiers in quaint, old-fashioned uniforms, and I speculated on the vast array of antlers hung on the walls, and wondered if they had all been killed by that fabulous huntsman, Teddy Roosevelt. I was assured of an interesting evening, for my dinner companions were the Honorable Charles Evans Hughes, secretary of state, and a former premier of Holland, Jonkheer van Karnebeeck, an old friend from Geneva. The dining room table was L-shaped, decorated with masses of exquisite flowers, and the service, though not elaborate, was perfect. I never touch wine of any kind, but I could not help noticing how undressed that immense expanse of white table cloth appeared without the usual profusion of wine glasses.

Prohibition accorded us many laughs, but the incident we enjoyed most occurred just before our departure. We had half a dozen cases of fine French wine left over from the supply which our diplomatic immunity had enabled us to import from London as a protection against arid interludes. Wellington, wishing to give some small farewell souvenirs to various friends and colleagues, offered each one the choice between a dozen bottles and a signed photograph. Only one preferred a photograph.

After Christmas the weather turned extremely cold. Japanese and Chinese delegates became deadlocked in their treaty negotiations, and I secretly rejoiced in this impasse because Wellington had a few leisure moments to devote to

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me. In the afternoons we drove through the countryside in an open car and though I almost froze to death, I knew the air was good for me. On our return one day we found our small drawing room overflowing with fierce-looking young Chinese, who were gesticulating angrily with old Wang, the valet. We both recognized them at once as a threatening group of students. Wellington pushed me towards the stairs only a fraction of a second before they swarmed violently around him. Safely behind the banisters, but none the less terrified, I saw old Wang shove through the mob and reach my husband's side. At my elbow my English maid chattered, "Madame, they've cut the wires!" I looked around frantically for help. None of the other delegates was in sight. Below, the students were loudly berating Wellington for the Chinese delegation's supposedly weak-kneed policy toward Japan. Quiet and composed, he answered their challenge, and quickly made clear the firm stand being taken by the Chinese delegation. As he argued coolly, the hot-headed students listened with attention, gradually became reassured and at last left Moran house peaceably.

China's mission to the Nine Power Conference was not directly concerned with naval balance of power and disarmament problems. What we hoped most to bring about in Washington was a settlement of the bitter Shantung controversy. The Japanese, entering the war on the Allied side in 1914, immediately occupied the province of Shantung which had been a German leasehold for many years. Japan formally pledged China the return of this important province after the war. This promise was not kept and the status of Shantung became a national cause. Public sentiment ran high and made direct negotiations with Japan out of the question. So the Washington Conference seemed an opportunity to reach a just settlement by long-distance diplomacy.

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All told, thirty-five parleys were held during the two and a half months of the Conference. The negotiations were twice deadlocked, and had it not been for the informal but most persuasive efforts of our good friends Mr. Arthur Balfour and Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes, Chinese and Japanese delegates might never have come to terms. It was out of compliment to these two unofficial and impartial "observers" that the mutual accord was drawn up in English—the first time in modern history, I believe, that two nations have signed an agreement written in a language foreign to both.

Throughout the Conference, the American press was most outspoken in its sympathy for China, and when the treaty was finally ready the news was spread-eagled across the front page of every newspaper. I was too close to what was going on to appreciate at the time how much the return of Shantung would mean to our countrymen back in China, but the full realization of its importance came to me when we returned home less than a year later. The treaty was then a *fait accompli*, and brass bands, waving flags and dense crowds welcomed us. Wellington was the hero of the hour and rode through Peking at the head of a procession, passing under an impressive series of triumphant arches erected in his honor.

While statesmen and delegates were feverishly struggling to return the province of Shantung to its rightful owner, the hour was fast approaching for a momentous event in my own personal history. In fact, the very morning that the final parleys were resumed my baby resolved to make his first appearance. I stubbornly refused to go to a hospital, for I was determined that my child should be born under extraterritorial rights, and as Moran House was the official headquarters for the Chinese delegation I presumed it to be

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Chinese soil. Wellington was compelled to rush away to the Pan American Building, leaving me surrounded by unfamiliar foreign doctors and nurses. For thirty-six long miserable hours, I was convinced I was going to die. At exactly eight o'clock on a Sunday evening, January 30, 1922, our son was born. He weighed barely five pounds, and seemed very small to have caused so much trouble. The parley had been in continuous session all day, and the delegates seemed to be settling down for the night. No one dared interrupt at this crucial stage, so news of my son's safe arrival was scribbled on a scrap of paper and passed through the closed doors. I believe that it was Dr. U. Y. Yen, my future brother-in-law, who opened the note and whispered its contents to my husband.

The only conference baby was widely publicized. We were deluged with presents, and I was tremendously touched by the scores of telegrams sent me from all over the country by women whom I had never seen. The birth of a son was a propitious sign, and Wellington decided to call our first-born Kai Yuen, or New Era. Like all upper-class Chinese boys, our son acquired two names, first his given name Kai Yuen, then his official name Yu-chang, which was only decided upon much later, after consulting my father and gaining the consent of my husband's elder brother, the head of the Koo family. The name Wellington, incidentally, is derived from the approximate anglicization of Vui Kuiyn, my husband's Chinese name. It is obviously easier for Westerners to pronounce and as we have lived so much abroad our first son is invariably called Wellington, Jr.

In exactly a month the Koo family was sailing back to London. As the *Homeric* buffeted through the rough seas

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I lay in bed tired, a bit seasick and utterly relaxed. At last I had time to look back through the two crowded years since leaving the Orient. I had come a long way. The spoiled, frivolous girl had almost disappeared, and in her place was a woman who was beginning to understand what life was about, a woman who had made her own small success, achieved a few desires and suffered almost no disappointment. My evolution had been so imperceptible that I had not realized the change.

It had started with my marriage to Wellington, a marriage which I now felt certain was my true destiny. Geneva had been my first awakening, a world which was brilliant, international and far removed from my narrow little planet. I learned of diplomacy and politics, exciting careers which I had not known existed. I learned of the country to whose service my husband was devoting his life, the same China and yet a new China, nearer, more personal, truly a country of my own.

London was the next stepping stone. It was here that I first took part in Wellington's life, and changed my passive, pliant rôle to one of action. I found self-expression in the decoration of our Legation. It was my first personal background. I created it as I desired it, and knew it was appropriate. I learned to manage our complicated establishment and entertain in the European manner, and deliberately set out to create my own career.

In Washington I had advanced a step further, and discovered it was not enough just to do things. I must actually be somebody, quite on my own and not because the husband I had grown to love absorbingly was a man of importance.

On the eve of our return to London I realized I was acquiring new ambitions for us both, which already were outgrowing the limitations of the Court of St. James. For the first

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time since our marriage my husband was not under the pressure of overwork. In this too brief interlude, he actually had time to spare. We talked together a great deal. One day I ventured to speak out my growing dissatisfaction with our life in London, and told him that I wanted more for him for myself. He was tremendously surprised.

"If you aren't satisfied with being Ministress in London, then you'll never be satisfied, for I can do no better," he said indignantly. "This post is very important to our country. And it is decidedly unusual that it should have been given to anyone as young as I."

But I refused to be put off so easily. "Being Minister in London isn't enough for you," I retorted sharply. "Where your heart is there your life should be." I waited for the idea to sink in. "How often have you told me that since a boy you have had one real ambition. It's not at all impossible now. Who knows," I finished impressively, "you may be Prime Minister some day." The words were spoken lightly, but the fates must have been eavesdropping, for in less than three years my prophecy came true.

PART THREE

Lane of the Iron Lions

(15.)

Road to Peking

Wellington had been away from China for seven years. He was eager to report personally on the Washington Disarmament Conference, but another more important reason made him decide to return home a few weeks after our arrival in England. The political situation in Peking was unsettled and Wellington was anxious to get the feel of the country. He was impatient to catch the first boat, but I insisted on tagging along and persuaded him to give me time to pack. Finally everything was attended to, the mountain of luggage packed, locked and counted. On a drab, foggy day, in a welter of boxes, trunks, baby carriages, typewriters and dog baskets we left the Legation. Snubbed against the

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huge Thames dock was our ship, the old *Khyber*. Incredibly small, but cocky in a new coat of paint, she looked more like a private yacht than a P. & O. liner. She was a vivid contrast to the luxurious *Homeric* but I was exultant with pride, for in my husband's special honor the Chinese colors rippled from the masthead on equal terms with the Union Jack.

Our party seemed to occupy most of the first-class cabins. It included the usual platoon of secretaries plus my step-children and their nursery governess, the baby and his Nanny, my English maid and old Wang, the valet.

It took us thirty-five days to voyage from Marseilles to Hong Kong. As the *Khyber* sidled slowly through Suez, steamed down the Red Sea and headed into the mountainous waves of a torrid Indian Ocean monsoon, I could scarcely contain my eagerness to stand on Chinese soil. The China which I had once accepted so passively had blossomed since my marriage into a more personal land, a land which already possessed my husband body and soul, and was slowly claiming my devotion. I was returning to my country, not as a heedless young girl, but as a woman who had an assured position of her own to maintain. I was quite ready to begin.

Since Mama and I had left for Europe three years before, Papa had been living in Singapore. As the *Khyber* nosed into the palm-fringed harbor at dawn, I had to scramble hastily into my clothes to greet Papa, who was the first aboard. In our happy, exquisite meeting I forgot all about my husband and my baby. Papa and I were together again, nothing else mattered. We said the most foolish things to each other, trying to span long years in a few short minutes. Then, suddenly, at my elbow stood Wellington. "I have not been presented to your father," he said with polite formality. I held my breath as Papa and my husband shook hands.

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It seemed as though the entire Chinese community in Singapore was on the dock to greet us. After we had been presented to scores of prominent Chinese, we went to the Raffles Hotel where a suite had been reserved for our overnight stay.

We had one moment's breathing spell that morning, for we were guests of honor at a noon luncheon given by the Chinese chamber of commerce at Tandjong Katung, a fashionable beach resort just outside the city. All formal lunches seem alike to me, but this was unforgettable because I longed for tropical fruit and instead, as a special treat, we were offered grapes, apples and pears which had been imported at enormous expense all the way from Australia! I could not wait to visit the old familiar markets and indulge in an orgy of my favorite fruits. While Wellington made his round of official calls and inspected Papa's rubber plantations, I shopped happily. I captured several doerians, those evil-smelling fruits from Java, but I was careful not to bring them back to the hotel. When we stopped at Penang I had brought several aboard the *Khyber* and old Wang, on Wellington's instructions, had tossed them overboard!

The following day I spent with Papa. He had given up our handsome house, the Sikh guards, his racing stable, and lived in an unpretentious bungalow. Though he still owned several expensive automobiles and kept many servants, there was no trace of the luxurious life which he and Mama had shared together. In fact I was genuinely disturbed at his simple mode of living which seemed at such variance with his tastes and character. He was as spruce as ever, as physically alert, but though I hated to admit it, his mind had deteriorated perceptibly.

Afterwards Papa put me through a searching questionnaire about my life. He asked if I had sufficient money to

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maintain my position in style, but his greatest concern was how we were received by British officialdom. Vividly remembering his struggles with harsh Dutch officials and his many business difficulties, Papa could not understand the privileges and courtesies accorded to a minister-plenipotentiary. I was so accustomed to the frills of protocol that I found his anxiety absurd, quite forgetting that only two years before I would have asked exactly the same questions. He was extremely curious about my husband, but far too subtle to come out in the open on so personal a subject. By skillful manoeuvring he satisfied himself on two worrisome points—that Wellington was “nice” to me and that I was happy.

When I fully realized how changed Papa had become without Mama, I was glad to be married and independent. I knew I could never again be content in his house.

Our Singapore stop-over lasted thirty-six hours, and at twilight the *Khyber* weighed anchor for Hong Kong. Papa was utterly depressed, but managed to wring some small enjoyment from my departure by a flurry of old-time magnificence. He crowded my cabin with giant orchids, massed in baskets and tumbling in profligate sprays from a dozen vases and stocked the ship's ice-box with my favorite tropical fruits. As a final gesture Papa tucked a check into my handbag. I could not resist peeking, and what I saw made me gasp in delighted astonishment. We stood close together until the last gang-plank lifted. On the dock he waved tirelessly until his figure blurred into a pin-point of wavering white. I was heartbroken at leaving after such a brief interlude, and vowed as I cried myself to sleep to return as soon as we were settled in China.

Hong Kong is a delectable island which lies within sight of China proper across one of the loveliest bays in the world. The British governor general was on leave, and the colonial

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secretary, acting as substitute, gave an impressive luncheon in our honor at Government House. We were also fêted by Sir Robert and Lady Ho-tung. Sir Robert, whom we were to meet frequently in later years, was rated one of the wealthiest and most influential men in Hong Kong. He was one of the very few Chinese to be accorded a title by the British government.

In Singapore I had played truant to buy fruit; in Hong Kong I managed to elude our hospitable friends, and wander through the flower market. The flowers of Hong Kong had been a childhood fascination, and I remembered a narrow street zig-zagging gaily up a hill, where baskets of camellias and tuberose could be had for a few pennies. I associated the sweet overpowering scent of tuberose with Hong Kong because half the men wore them as boutonnières, and on festival days the women and children plaited them through their glistening hair. I soon found my favorite street and bought, recklessly, shiny-leaved bushes studded with fragile camellias shading from warm crimson to cool white. I plunged my face into baskets piled high with gardenias and tuberose until I grew giddy with their perfume. I was intoxicated with delight—I was almost home again.

For two days we sloshed through quiet seas north to Shanghai, and as the *Khyber* crept slowly up the yellow Woosung river we were besieged by a fleet of small boats. The newspaper men of Shanghai clambered aboard by the dozen, just as insistent as New York reporters, though their methods were surprisingly different. They swarmed about Wellington, but no cameras were aimed in my direction, no one asked me for an interview, I was completely overlooked. The pier was packed tight with people, all come evidently to welcome my husband. As we swung inshore

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a brass band, its musicians dazzlingly uniformed, crashed into the Chinese national anthem.

At the foot of the gang-plank stood Dr. C. T. Wang who, two years before in Paris, had urged me to marry Wellington. My husband and I walked half way down the gang-plank and stood while Dr. Wang delivered an affectionate, highly flattering speech of welcome. On shore we were engulfed by scores of Wellington's friends and admirers, all eager to shake hands and welcome him back. In the crush I was presented to my husband's two brothers and after exchanging a few totally inaudible words, was whisked away. Before calling on my mother-in-law we were to settle the children in a house which Wellington's family had prepared for us. I was so out of touch with China, so pampered by life in Europe where I had accepted as commonplace the greatest luxury, that the small house seemed inadequate. Keyed up after the excitement of our arrival, I announced pettishly to Wellington that I was moving immediately to a hotel. He pointed out calmly that his mother was waiting to receive us.

Once the round of family visits had been completed, I knew it would be too late to go to a hotel, so with small grace I consented to stay the night. The next morning I was up early and moved the children and nurses to a hotel on Bubbling Well Road. Wellington, doggedly refusing to admit discomfort, stayed on in the small house.

Madame Koo's spacious house was in the French concession. She received us in her private sitting room. My mother-in-law had not seen her son in seven years. Inwardly, I knew, both must have been atremble with happiness, but outwardly they remained true to perfect Chinese tradition. Their meeting was as restrained as if they had met casually an hour before; except for their smiling faces neither showed a ruffle of emotion. My mother-in-law did not kiss her son but

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stroked his shoulders, swiftly, almost primly. This was her sole gesture of affection. I hesitated in the doorway, unwilling to intrude. Then Wellington brought me forward to his mother. I started to kneel, for etiquette demanded the deepest of kow-tows on this, my first presentation. But the old lady rose to her tiny bound feet, and my two brothers-in-law, stooping quickly, lifted me even before my knees had touched the ground. Then my mother-in-law said something to me, and I realized with a sense of profound shock that I could not understand a word she said. She spoke in Shanghai dialect which I had never learned.

I turned helplessly to Wellington, who translated smilingly. His mother had asked me to come closer. She surveyed my smart French frock and my permanent wave intently. My coiffure was arranged in a fashionable mass of curls, it was warm for early June and my thin dress had the briefest sleeves. She patted my bare arms and asked anxiously, "Aren't you cold in that tight dress and with those bare arms?" She touched my hair as if to reassure herself it was not a wig and wondered aloud if it was difficult to dress in so complicated a manner. I was quite beyond her understanding. In the generation which separated us time had been accelerated a thousandfold in China; our habits, our minds, even our bodies were as different as if we had been born several hundred years apart. Yet, as her son's wife, my mother-in-law was determined to regard me with affection and even admiration.

We could not speak to each other, but I searched for a topic of conversation and found common ground—her newest grandson and my two step-children, none of whom Madame Koo had seen.

The sons and daughters of my two brothers-in-law were presented to us before we left my mother-in-law's house. One

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by one they kow-towed before my husband and myself. I had never had anyone kow-tow to me before. It made me feel very uncomfortable, especially after I noticed that the older children were not much younger than I. We promised to bring the grandchildren next day and, as parting gifts, my mother-in-law gave me a pair of beautifully wrought gold bracelets and a sable jacket made in Chinese fashion, with the fur inside.

We went directly from Mme. Koo's to call on my eldest sister-in-law. She received us in a drawing room where her husband's Ancestral Tablets were displayed on a carved wood altar. My sister-in-law, as conservative and old-fashioned as her mother, wore the traditional Chinese costume. She greeted her favorite brother precisely as had my mother-in-law, with no indication of either joy or affection. After presenting me, Wellington stood in front of the family altar and made the three bows politeness required, and I followed suit. We sat on hard high-backed Chinese chairs, sipping fragrant jasmin tea, eating delicious sweetmeats and candied fruit. I might as well have been deaf and dumb, for Wellington was much too engrossed to translate the lively conversation. Time passed, the chairs became more and more uncomfortable, finally Wellington could ignore my fidgets no longer and he was forced to take me away.

It was thrilling to be back in Shanghai after so many years, and during the few weeks before I left for Peking I made shopping sorties into the most outlandish sections of the city. I bought my baby son his first Chinese clothes; tiny quilted jackets and absurd boat-shaped hats trimmed incongruously with fierce, snarling tiger heads. His new red satin boots sported tiger heads too, and to my eyes he looked utterly ravishing!

The diplomatic triumph of saving Shantung from Jap-

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anese annexation achieved by Wellington and his colleagues at Washington, was wildly acclaimed in China. Wellington was welcomed as the public's No. 1 hero, the man of the hour. He set off for Peking in a blaze of glory with hundreds of well-wishers waving him good-bye. As the handsome private car, which the government insisted on providing, rolled grandly out of the station I could not repress a twinge or two of envy. I was missing all the excitement, having had to stay behind in Shanghai until my husband found us a house. Peking, I heard later, was decked out in his honor; the long avenues were straddled with triumphal arches and lined with students who cheered wildly. After Wellington had finally sent for me, his two punctilious brothers carefully settled me and my entourage on the Peking train. My only audience, they stood bowing politely on the station platform.

(16.)

Dream Come True

I was determined to arrive in Peking for the first time in broad daylight. So in a suffocating dust storm we left the train at Tien-tsin and spent the night in a casual hotel optimistically called "The Astor House." Wellington sent a secretary to accompany us from Tien-tsin since, sentimentally, he preferred to welcome us in the house he had chosen instead of the railroad station. As we sped swiftly through the city I caught tantalizing glimpses of courtyards, tiled roofs, gilded pagodas, of crimson, blue and mauve walls. Abruptly we turned, threading between two iron lions, ancient and spectacularly hirsute, down a narrow lane and then under a pagoda-shaped gateway of dazzling scarlet and gold. The

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car entered a courtyard fragrant with lilac trees, their mauve and white blossoms in full bloom. I could glimpse the tiled roofs, peaked razor-sharp, and imagined the grace of soft gray buildings half hidden by the lilacs. A rush of possessive delight swept through me—I knew that this at last was the fairy palace of my dreams. As the heavy doors swung open I felt contentment settle around me like a cloak. Here was my home, here I would be completely happy.

I stepped from the brilliant Peking sunshine into a room which was, and still is, if the Japanese have not destroyed it, the most beautiful room I have ever seen. Its vastness glowed golden-pink like the secret core of some exotic translucent shell. Its walls were panelled with pungent honey-colored sandalwood carved with consummate delicacy, the peony-pink carpet blended with the shimmering gold-brocade upholstery. Arched high into shadow, the ceiling was supported by beams embossed in gold leaf and traced with fantastically colored designs. A dozen melon-shaped lanterns, rich in pearl and enamel fringe, trailing yard-long crimson tassels, hesitated in the air. A huge, overgrown pearl, the center lantern, measured, I was told, twelve feet in height, eight around. It had been a gift to Ch'ien Lung, greatest of Manchu emperors, from his father. Among the chairs and sofas were low Chinese tables, their lacquered tops inlaid with mother-of-pearl, glowing in golden reflection. Along the walls were mirrored cabinets, and already I visualized their empty shelves filled with cool jades and frosty crystal. This exquisite room, so unexpected, so exactly what I had always desired, left me breathless. But the practical part of my being could not help noticing that central heating had been installed, its outlets cunningly concealed behind brass pierced to resemble incense burners.

Like all ancient Chinese houses, the palace was really

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a series of pavilions, some of them separate, others linked by passageways. A long corridor studded with pottery figures of China's eight legendary saints led from the golden salon to another equally surprising room. Here the ceiling was covered with squares of embossed paper, each section a different design of phoenixes entwined with lush peonies. Two gigantic wooden columns supported the ceiling. They were stained a rich brown and the wood, still alive, oozed glistening drops of resin. A score of slim silken panels striped one wall, each a vivid picture foiled against a creamy background. Not embroidered, but meticulously woven, the panels were framed Kehsuh work, a specialty of North China four hundred years ago. The dining room table was inlaid with antique enamel faded a delicious blue and etched with palest pink. The only other piece of furniture in the room was a k'ang or Chinese daybed. Of teak wood inset with mother-of-pearl, the enormous k'ang stood a few inches from the floor, its mattress covered in imperial yellow satin. The mattress was split in half, in between was a miniature marble table once used for pipes and for tea.

I wanted to linger, but Wellington urged me to inspect the rest of my domain. So, passing by windows opening on a tiny garden, its walls a cascade of purple wistaria, we reached a plain room where our feet clattered on a stone floor. A number of wooden chests with lids of pierced brass stood in a row. As I stopped to examine them my husband explained that this was the summer dining room, which on torrid days was kept delightfully cool by filling the chests with slabs of ice. It was the first time I had heard of air-conditioning!

I hurried on, eager to see what new wonders lay ahead. At the end of a passageway Wellington opened another door leading into an even larger drawing room. This was the Blue Room and everything, from the carpets, the stripes of silk

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alternating with wooden panels and the upholstery woven with Chinese characters of longevity, was a clear China blue. It was exceedingly handsome, but not as appealing to me as the Golden Salon. Later I turned the Blue Room into a banquet hall for my official dinners. The surrounding verandah had the most fascinating of all the ceilings in my palace, its beams forming a scarlet fretwork against a background of mauve, green, blue and gold stripes. A garish combination perhaps, but perfect in the brilliant Peking sunlight. On a terrace beyond loomed ten Ali Baba-sized jars. I peered through the netting covers and saw crimson fish with rare five-pointed tails twitching behind them like a court train; some of them looked comically intellectual, with actual eyebrows and a peculiar protuberance like a third eye in the center of their foreheads. Most intriguing of all was a group of jet black beauties, fully ten inches long, who lay motionless on the bottom, their bellies distended monstrously. When I poked them gently with a stick to see if they were really alive, the goldfish keeper, an elderly Chinese who stood at a respectful distance, caught his breath with an audible hiss. He devoted his life, I discovered, to catering to the wants of these superbly aristocratic fish. When I knew him better he insisted that his charges were temperamental, and sometimes, after being annoyed, actually died of sheer spite.*

These beautiful rooms, more perfect than any visualized in my wildest flights of fancy, were in the eastern part of the palace. There were also a number of bedrooms and baths furnished in nondescript fashion, which in a glance I saw refurnished to my taste. The western section of the palace was to be Wellington's domain. A main building and a series

* I have heard through devious routes that my goldfish were devoured by Japanese soldiers.

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of smaller identical pavilions, their roof ends upcurled like those of Chinese temples, surrounded a paved courtyard to the left of the entrance gate. The pavilions were libraries, each stacked high with a remarkable collection of ancient Chinese scrolls. Within the larger building was a three-room suite, entirely out of key with the glowing, romantic atmosphere of the eastern palace. Though the walls were panelled in creamy silk, the ceiling was plain white plaster; worn leather covered the ugly furniture, and a glare of uncompromising light drained down from cheap German lamps. Yet less than three years later world attention was focused on these unpretentious rooms, for here Dr. Sun Yat-sen, revered founder of the Chinese Republic, died. He had come to Peking for treatment at the Rockefeller Institute, and his death was quite sudden. Later we transformed this small salon into a shrine.

The palace grounds were landscaped with exquisite feeling for detail. There were ornamental hills, huge shade trees and an artificial pond with a fierce little waterfall which splashed down through a network of tiny streams. There were frivolous camel-backed bridges and miniature pagodas made into lanterns. We followed an artfully rambling path to an enchanting garden where lilacs and wistaria, willows and mimosas, peach trees and plums all bloomed extravagantly. There was a wide spreading satin-smooth lawn, fringed with mimosas. Green turf is a rarity in Peking, I was told, for the brilliant sun and dry climate combine to burn it to a crisp by mid-June.

Besides the eastern and western palaces, three pavilions and a handful of pagodas were scattered about the grounds. The pagodas were used as tea houses or for a quiet game of mah-jong, while the pavilions were separate housekeeping units, each with its own kitchen. I installed my step-children

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in their own pavilion and reserved the others for guest houses. Our guests were entirely independent of the main house, even at mealtime, since in China a guest pleases himself, not his hostess, thus making hospitality a delight instead of a strain.

It astonished me to find that the palace walls enclosed some ten acres, for I was used to cities where real-estate prices were prohibitive. We were right in the center of things, too, with the Ministry of Marine and the Ministry of War near neighbors; but land is cheap in Peking, and houses with huge gardens are not unusual.

After my first excitement tempered, I relaxed and listened to the history of our new home, which was known as Chen Yuan Yuan's Palace. Chen Yuan Yuan was an enticing sing-song girl who served the father-in-law of the last Ming Emperor. Chen was her surname, Yuan Yuan a descriptive tag-line meaning "Round-Faced Beauty." It was mid-seventeenth century and powerful Manchu armies were rolling south from Manchuria, eager to crush the Ming Dynasty. The Emperor's father-in-law hoped to induce Wu San Kuei, a famous general, to fight the Manchus. The general was handsomely entertained and, according to the custom of those days, the beautiful sing-song girl was called upon to amuse him. Wu was so captivated by her charms that when the Emperor's father-in-law offered him Chen Yuan Yuan, he determined to join the Ming forces. He marched north bravely to battle the encroaching Manchus. While Wu and his soldiers staunchly defended the mountain passes against enemy attack, Li, a Chinese rebel with royal pretensions, sneaked into Peking with his own private army. Peking was ravaged, the great palaces looted, and in the ensuing grim reign of terror the Ming Emperor, defenseless without Wu, fled. High on a hill above the Forbidden City, the last of the Mings hanged himself from a tree.

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Too late the doughty Wu sped back. Over the dusty highway a messenger galloped with news of the Emperor's suicide and an urgent letter from the general's father. The Wu family was being held hostage, and their lives depended on his immediate submission to Li. While Wu hesitated, another messenger gasped that the "Round-Faced Beauty," the choicest tidbit of spoil, had been awarded to a high-ranking rebel officer. Wu, furious, about-faced his army to relieve the capital and rescue Chen. But he took time out to compose two remarkable letters. One censored his father for yielding Chen; the other invited his former enemy, the Manchu general, to join forces in attacking Peking. The rebel chief Li, learning that both Wu and the Manchu army were surrounding the city, played his trump card. He placed Chen in front of the advancing army. To save his beloved, Wu called a halt and during the ensuing confusion Li managed to escape. In the fierce fighting which followed swiftly, much of Peking was burnt but fortunately for me, Chen Yuan Yuan's palace remained unharmed.

My first few weeks in Peking were blurred with happiness. A deep ecstasy swept over me, bewitching mind and body, leaving them dulled to all sensation except the beauty which surrounded me. I wandered through the gardens, revelling in the perfume of lilacs and wistaria. I felt the sun spread warm on my head and shoulders as I stopped atop a camel-backed bridge, listening to the rustling waterfall. Long lazy hours I watched the goldfish float listlessly with scarcely quivering gauzy tails, their eyes distended by some inner gluttony. Early in the cool mornings I gathered sprays of peach blossoms; armfuls of poenies which blossomed together in unexpected prodigality. Each day curio-vendors brought me their wares. Vivid embroideries, skillfully woven silks and furs from Manchuria were stacked in luxuriant heaps on

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sofas and chairs. I bought thoughtlessly, when a color caught my eyes or the voluptuous feel of a silky pelt pleased my fingers.

The days slipped by, I barely noticed their passing until Wellington, sitting beside me on the terrace one starlit evening, gently brought me back to reality.

"You must not dream away more days and nights," he said. "It is time that you call on the wife of our president and you must think, too, of your entertaining."

When I fully emerged from my period of happy suspended animation we began to entertain. I found house-keeping effortless in Peking, and the sheer comfort of living almost unbelievable. Some thirty servants, so unobtrusive that I was almost unconscious of their presence, staffed our palace. The northern Chinese are the best servants in the world, I believe, because they possess an uncanny knack of foreseeing your every want. They treated me like a deity, rigidly concealing any jarring domestic occurrences. Actually I had little contact with the household's lesser lights. They were engaged and discharged by the major-domo or that unique Chinese factotum, the Number One boy. In all the years I lived in Peking, I interviewed only two servants, the Number One boy and my personal maid, both of whom were "presented" to me by the major-domo.

Our kitchen was under the double supervision of a Chinese cook specializing in French dishes and a Chinese chef whose culinary reputation was well known throughout Peking. The chef was a real magician, as night or day, no matter how unreasonable the hour, he was able to produce any quantity of delicious food. I had only to command, and it was done. Whenever I gave a dinner, luncheon or tea the major-domo prepared in advance three or four menus. My sole task was to choose the most appealing. There was no bother of market-

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ing, no searching for delicacies, the major-domo attended to every detail. Once the menu was decided on, the Number One boy asked what color scheme I preferred for the flowers and dinner service. Sometimes I deliberately picked out a difficult color, but his ingenuity never failed. The decorations were enchanting, and he served four or forty with the same thoughtful perfection.

The Chinese tipping system is the only "out" in entertaining. Because Wellington was a high government official we were expected to tip handsomely at every private house, no matter how brief our call. Punctiliously, at the end of each visit a precise sum of money was handed to the servant at the door. If it was expensive for us to accept hospitality, our presence was even more costly to the host. Etiquette demanded that he tip our chauffeur two dollars and give my husband's brace of bodyguards a dollar apiece. Since it was considered unwise to permit bodyguards to leave the house, our host had to provide them with dinner and luncheon or tea. When we gave a large dinner party our tips often added up to a hundred dollars. If forty guests were expected, I had to count on taking care of eighteen or more chauffeurs and an indeterminate array of bodyguards, whose numbers increased according to the importance or military inclination of their employers. The more humble household servants, incidentally, in addition to their salaries, receive a bonus several times a year. Whenever mah-jong or any game of chance is played the host and guest put aside a "kitty" which is either divided among the servants that evening or tucked away and presented in its grand total at festival time. The "kitty" varies, of course, in each household but any family rich enough to keep a servant is sure to collect an appreciable sum during the year.

I was expecting my second child, and in the beginning of

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1923 decided to visit my father before I became unable to travel. It was my first trip as wife of a cabinet minister and I journeyed south in a dazzling private car put at my disposal by the minister of communications. In those slow times Peking and Shanghai were still three days apart. There was no bridge over the Yangtse river, and passengers had to ferry from Pukow to Nanking to make the railroad connection. The governor's launch hustled me across, and I continued on in a second equally stylish private car. From Shanghai to Singapore took a week by boat, and Papa met me at the end of my long voyage. He was in fine fettle and we picked up the threads of our intimacy where we had dropped them eight months before. He insisted on an itemized account of my actions and impressions since leaving Singapore. No detail of my life in Peking seemed too inconsequential. Papa had a genius for listening, which encouraged as well as flattered, and at one of our sessions I casually remarked that I had no real home. It seemed a shame, I continued, that I, his daughter, and the wife of China's Minister of Foreign Affairs, had to live in a borrowed house. Papa was startled.

"Do you mean to say that your husband has no house of his own?" he exclaimed. I explained that Wellington had lived many years abroad, and until now the upkeep of a residence in China would have been a needless expense.

Papa mulled over my remarks thoughtfully. In a few minutes his face wrinkled into a broad grin, and he announced dramatically that the fairy palace would be mine. Thrilled to tears, I cabled Wellington immediately. But when with his usual caution he cabled back the price Papa was flabbergasted. "You had better find a less expensive place to live in," he snapped crossly. I was more determined than ever to have my palace and in a wordy wire outlined the situation

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to Wellington. He countered quickly, offering to put up half the money. This so piqued Papa's pride that without further ado the Peking palace became mine.

After the purchase formalities had been completed I broke the news gently to Papa that the palace was in poor repair. I calculated it would cost half as much again as the purchase price to put everything in perfect order. To put it mildly, Papa was terribly indignant at first. But gradually, as the idea of my owning the finest palace in Peking appealed to his instinct for the superlative, he began to give in. I was certain that before leaving Singapore Papa would give me the money I needed.

I was back in Peking by spring and in the months before my second son was born I happily planned the alterations for my own rooms and a myriad less interesting repairs throughout the palace. I went about very little, lolling long hours in my garden, until a fierce heat wave drove me indoors. Then I scarcely left the stone room, keeping the big chests filled with ice and manufacturing cool breezes by aiming at them a battery of electric fans. Friends came to see me every day; time passed swiftly. I was disappointed that my baby was a boy—I wanted a girl badly—but Fu-chang behaved with such perfect propriety and caused so little trouble that my regrets soon vanished.

After the birth of Fu-chang the alterations were slowly completed. I created as much beauty as I could and irrevocably stamped my personality on the palace. I cherished my home, it was my one real possession, the symbol of security, peace, and the background I wanted my sons to remember.

(17.)

First Ladies

After my first deliciously idle months in Peking, Wellington brought me down to earth gently. I must start my official duties, he said. Though I had grasped the more obvious intricacies of diplomatic life, I knew nothing about Chinese politics and had no idea of my responsibilities as wife to the minister of foreign affairs. I was certain of only one concrete fact, next to the president and premier, Wellington outranked everyone in China. His prominence did not in the least impress me. I was so convinced of my husband's high destiny that I never imagined him in any less exalted position. My ignorance was appalling, but Wellington ac-

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cepted my shortcomings so patiently I was scarcely aware of them.

My initiation into official Chinese life commenced with a round of calls from the ladies of the diplomatic corps. I received them singly and in pairs at a succession of afternoon teas. These ladies lived carefree lives and came in contact with the Chinese only on formal occasions.

Four of these foreign ladies, Senhora de Freitas, Senora Garrido, Madame de Martel and Lady Macleay, became my real friends. Senhora de Freitas was a charming blonde Portuguese. Her amiable husband, doyen of the diplomatic corps, was a passionate collector of Chinese *objets d'art*. Vivacious Senora Garrido, wife of the Spanish minister, was as loyal as she was gay. Parisian Madame de Martel seldom mingled with the Chinese, preferring to stay outside Peking at P'aomachang, where she kept a kennel and a stable of Manchurian ponies. Lady Macleay, wife of Sir Ronald, Britain's Minister to China, was an outstanding personage in Peking. Lady Macleay's legation, rated one of the most perfect examples of Chinese architecture, was known as the Ch'ien Lung Palace and had been built by a famous eighteenth-century emperor for his thirty-third son. Lady Macleay had succeeded in blending solid English comfort with delicate Chinese furnishings and in this truly exquisite setting presided over the most stimulating parties in Peking.

While I was sampling the pleasures and excitements of my new life the political wheel turned fast. Chang Tso-lin, the great Manchurian ward lord, had been driven north to his native province by the combined forces of General Wu Pei-fu, a former ally, and the "Christian General" Feng Yushiang. With Chang momentarily in eclipse, President Hsu Shih-chang was forced to resign and former president, Li Yuan-hung, was recalled to office.

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For five years Li Yuan-hung had lived in retirement, and on returning to the presidency he stayed in his own house, going to the Forbidden City only for official receptions. Madame Li was the mother of his sons and daughters. She was short, butter-ball plump, had tiny bound feet. In an easy-going fashion she permitted a half-Manchu lady, who later was appointed Mistress of Ceremonies, to run her social life. Madame Li was very kind-hearted and sent me innumerable scrolls of red paper covered with mysterious characters which had been blessed by Buddhist priests. I was told to hang these charms beside my bed to protect me from evil spirits. We used to meet often in the president's house on festival celebrations, which Madame Li observed punctiliously.

Their first official function was an entertaining luncheon in honor of Edwin H. Denby, then Secretary of the United States Navy. The Lis knew little about foreigners and as forty luncheon guests had accepted, elaborate preparations were made. The Master of Ceremonies reviewed meticulously the more confusing details of European etiquette. They took it all calmly until it was explained that each had to walk into luncheon arm in arm with a foreigner. This flabbergasted them so completely that the Master of Ceremonies, afraid of a slip in his well-laid plans, made the presidential couple rehearse their dining-room march in advance.

The gathering of luncheon guests was a unique sight. The handful of American women, friendly, very much at ease and dressed appropriately in light summer frocks, made a curious contrast to the reserved Chinese ladies in their stiff all-enveloping official robes. This costume, worn at ceremonious events by wives of government dignitaries, had a pleated, scarlet silk skirt topped by a black jacket embroidered with a series of circles whose number increased

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according to the husband's rank. As my robe was still being embroidered, I wore a French dress and looked completely out of the East-West picture.

The procession into the dining room led off smoothly. Tall, stocky Mr. Denby solemnly escorted Madame Li, who swayed along perilously on her bound feet, her broad little body exaggerated by the scarlet skirt and voluminous jacket with its impressive array of thirteen circles. We were all seated at a single, long table. The Chinese food was served in European style to save the guests from any embarrassing struggle with chopsticks. Afterwards, we were photographed *en masse* but just as the group was about to be snapped, Wellington discovered Madame Li had disappeared. The poor lady, bewildered and believing the luncheon at an end, had quietly slipped away. She was retrieved in the nick of time and obligingly posed beside Secretary Denby.

In 1922, when we arrived in Peking, General Wu Pei-fu was the most important man in China. The vast country south of the Great Wall, which separated China from Manchuria and its dictator Chang Tso-lin, was largely under Wu's domination.

It was General Wu Pei-fu's custom to hold a weekly military council and Wellington was immediately invited to attend. They had never met before, for Wu had risen to power during my husband's long absence abroad. Wellington was much impressed by the general, a quiet little man in plain uniform, who dominated the meeting with unobtrusive tact. His reddish brown hair, a unique color among the Chinese, was cropped short and his eyes blazed with fanatical intensity.

Wellington was eager to have me call on Madame Wu Pei-fu. The following day, accompanied by Madame Tang, wife of General Tang, one of the "cupids" of my Paris

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courtship, I paid my official respects. Madame Wu, the general's only wife, shared his characteristics, for she was simple, courteous and able. She was tall for a Chinese woman, and unusually strong. Her athletic prowess was to stand her in good stead. Two years later she was forced to flee from Peking disguised as a peasant and for weeks rode muleback over hazardous mountain trails. In spite of her important position, Madame Wu was unostentatious; she dressed in black, her sole ornaments were modest pearl earrings and a jade hair pin.

I liked her immediately, and gave a dinner in her honor a few days later. It was purely a feminine gathering, as men were never asked to dine with really conservative, old-fashioned Chinese ladies. I was amazed to discover that Madame Wu had a wonderful head and could down a surprising quantity of wine. I was in an awkward spot, even a few sips of alcohol make me ill, yet Chinese etiquette insists that guests and host or hostess toast each other throughout the meal. Furthermore, the wine cup must be emptied at one swallow! I sipped the first drink and begged my guest of honor to excuse me for not emptying the cup. But Madame Wu, believing I was being modest, heartily urged me to drink. It was useless to explain my alcoholic allergy, and not wanting to spoil the fun, I whispered to the Number One boy to fill my cup with tea and a dash of wine. The ruse was a success, and the party went off triumphantly.

Though Madame Wu was sophisticated about wines, she had never sampled the blander delights of ice cream. She lunched one day with an American friend of mine, and at dessert a bowl of ice cream was placed, Chinese fashion, in the center of the table. Madame Wu thought it looked too uninteresting to taste, but after much coaxing took a small spoonful from my plate. The ice cream pleased her immensely,

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and after eating a generous helping she asked to take home what was left over. Our hostess was delighted. "That's fine! I'll put it back in the freezer until you're ready to leave," she said, and added as an afterthought, "I suppose you're going straight home, Madame Wu?" "Not at all," answered the general's wife nonchalantly, "I'm going calling, but I'll take the ice cream along and eat it for supper!"

A year later, Li Yuan-hung was spirited out of office and was succeeded by General Tsao Kun. I went with Madame Wu Pei-fu to make my official call. The new president and his wife had established themselves in the presidential palace, which was in the Imperial City, a section of Peking surrounding the famous yellow buildings of the Forbidden City where Hsuan-tung, the Manchu Boy Emperor, now Henry Pu-yi of "Manchukuo," then lived. As residential quarters, the Tsao Kuns had taken over a modern annex of the imperial palace which the old Manchu Dowager Empress Tzu-Hsi had built solely as a place to receive the foreign diplomats. The annex, which was called the Chü Jun Tang, had been furnished by the Dowager Empress in an unhappy combination of hideous European and Chinese styles. But Chü Jun Tang's romantic situation almost made up for its ugliness. It was built on an island in the Southern Seas, a twin of the Northern Seas, both picturesque lakes fed by waters from the Jade Fountain, some miles outside Peking.

Masculine visitors were not admitted to Madame Liu's quarters, and when we went to call, she was surrounded by twenty or thirty women, most of them relatives, or wives of Wu Pei-fu's generals. The women in their rainbow robes looked as fragile as butterflies against the grotesque European furniture which crowded the room. Madame Liu wore the old-fashioned Chinese robes, heel-less embroidered shoes and was bedecked extravagantly with jewels. She had an

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exquisite skin and large dark eyes. She took the greatest pains to make herself agreeable, examined my high-heeled shoes and cross-questioned me on foreign ways. Why did people dance together, she wanted to know, and was it true that men and women clasped each other around the waist? My replies fascinated her. When I asked permission to leave, she would not hear of it and insisted that I remain for dinner. Later in the evening the president dropped in casually. His bearing was military, his close-cropped head offset by a luxuriant black moustache, Tsao Kun beamed. "So you are Sao Chuen's Madame!" he said pleasantly. Sao Chuen is Wellington's school name and is used only by his intimates.

Madame Liu practically commanded me to come to the palace every day. Her apartments were always crowded. A stream of women came and went, their chatter was incessant. A few of the "favorites," who invariably stayed to dinner, played mah-jong to pass the time. I learned in self-defense, cleverly coached by Madame Wu, who, though she refused to play, must have been a past master of the game.

As the weeks went by, Madame Liu showed her affection for me in many ways. If I enjoyed a dish at the palace dinners, its duplicate would be despatched to my house next day. There was one complicated fish dish I particularly craved. It appeared with such frequency at home that Wellington nicknamed it the "Presidential Fish."

Madames Liu and Wu often came to see me informally, and to vary the palace routine we made sightseeing trips or else planned more elaborate expeditions to various temples, where on festival days we burnt incense and prayed. Leaving the palace, we formed an impressive cavalcade. Madame Liu's car was guarded by four soldiers ferociously armed to the teeth, who stood on the running board, clinging pre-

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cariously by specially made handles. We were trailed by six or eight automobiles crammed with ladies-in-waiting, amahs, young girl attendants and men-servants brought along to serve tea and delicacies when we went to the more distant temples. The Peking winters were cold and as we jounced across the countryside I wondered why the guards were not frozen.

Sometimes we journeyed to the Western Hills temples, a good forty miles outside Peking. Our whole party was carted up to the temples in sedan chairs importantly toted by four bearers. I astonished Madame Liu by walking, and when I tired, by riding donkeyback. Madame Wu also delighted in riding, but being the wife of a great war lord, she would never have indulged in so undignified a procedure if I had not set the example. Undoubtedly my antics were considered in questionable taste by Madame Liu's retinue, but I soon discovered I could do no wrong; even my most unconventional actions were excused because of my foreign education.

Madame Liu's mother accompanied us on our jaunts. She was a pleasant old soul, tall, fat and addicted to an old-fashioned water pipe. A water pipe is a nuisance. The long stem must be stuffed with woolly Chinese tobacco, so difficult for air to sift through, and has to be relit every few puffs. Wherever the old lady went her pipe went too, and since she was the mother-in-law of China's president, she considered her grand position necessitated a pair of girl attendants whose only duty was to care for the precious pipe. They were always part of our small parade, and trotted along solemnly beside their mistress' chair, one holding the pipe, the other a taper. The pipe was their life work, they did little else except help the old lady, who had bound feet, walk the few yards from sedan chair to automobile.

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All the first ladies of Peking wanted to meet the foreign diplomats' wives. Though Madame Liu was nervous at the idea, she was as anxious as the second Madame Li had been to arrange a formal presentation. There was no Mistress of Ceremonies under the Tsao Kun regime and I, as wife of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, would be largely responsible for the arrangements. You may be sure I was wary about plunging into such complicated protocol without the president's unqualified consent. Tsao Kun did not quite approve of Madame Liu's desire to cut a figure in foreign society, so the meeting was continually postponed until Tsao Kun, like his predecessors, was ejected from his exalted office.

Madame Liu had great influence over her husband during his stormy political career. But she hated and feared his secretary, an unscrupulous creature who had grown rich through the "squeeze" he extracted from anyone wishing favors of the president. She tried in vain to open her husband's eyes to the miserable man's faults. One day I happened to be in Madame Liu's apartment, when the president entered with his secretary. It was at a crucial moment in Tsao Kun's career, and when they started a low-voiced discussion Madame Liu drew near anxiously. Whatever she heard made her fly into a rage. "Mark my words," she stormed, "unless you get rid of this man he will cause your downfall!" And with one swift motion, she jerked a fan from her sleeve and struck the secretary across the face. The secretary's eyes flashed malevolently, but with superlative control his face remained motionless and he sank to his knees, kow-towing at the angry woman's feet. Tsao Kun curtly ordered him from the room, and walking backwards, the rascal bowed himself out. The president was horribly embarrassed at my having witnessed this scene and excused himself brusquely. Madame Liu was on the verge of hysterics and before leaving I summoned a lady-

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in-waiting to care for her. All was serene when I returned to the palace next day. Madame Liu never mentioned the secretary's name again, though I learned subsequently he had been convicted of embezzlement and was shot on General Feng Yu-hsiang's order.

During the Tsao Kun regime my life grew increasingly crowded. I was more active than any woman in Peking, because of the social obligations my husband's post involved and because my foreign education drew me into all circles. So extraordinary was the contrast between the quick tempo of foreign life in Peking and the more mellow cadence of the Chinese, that often I felt as if I had a dual personality.

I never ceased trying to bring together Chinese women and their European prototypes. But no matter how friendly and gracious their intention, it was impossible for a foreigner to penetrate the Chinese "interior life." The fault lay most probably in the great barrier of language. So many of the ladies of Chinese officialdom spoke only their native tongue. They had no technique for making friends with foreigners and when East met West they remained shyly aloof, adhering rigidly to their perfect party manners. In Peking the various legations entertained with unflagging zeal. The cabinet ministers were lunched and dined handsomely, but their wives seldom accepted the frequent invitations. They felt uncomfortable in mixed foreign company, and sitting through a long dinner, not understanding a word of the conversation, was too difficult.

Most of the cabinet ministers wore Western clothes and were accustomed to European ways, but occasionally an elderly statesman would crop up whose experience in these matters was nil. Dressing Western fashion was the smart thing to do, and though these elderly gentlemen looked most distinguished in Chinese robes, they believed it important to

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follow the modern trend. So time and again Wellington's impeccable British tail coat was hurriedly borrowed and sent to the tailor to be copied.

On one occasion Sir Ronald and Lady Macleay gave an especially glittering dinner for the whole cabinet. A dear old minister who had never been to a foreign party nor worn Western dress was among those present. He turned up superbly arrayed in tails, white tie and twinkling patent leather pumps. He grinned with pleasure at our compliments, but I noticed he was still somewhat ill at ease. He walked into dinner with a queer crablike motion and afterwards stood fidgeting, shifting his weight from one foot to another. I asked him if anything was the matter and he replied with exquisite politeness that foreign shoes were a ghastly form of torture and that his feet hurt! Glancing down I nearly rolled off my chair with laughter, for accustomed only to soft, shapeless Chinese slippers, the minister had innocently inserted his right foot into the left shoe, and his left foot into the right.

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In its intricacies and subtle gradations the Eastern code of social behavior differs radically from the Western, and as a Peking hostess, I had the confusing task of following a double standard of manners. Take for example the simplest social equation; a man, his wife and children: to occidentals, just plain unvarying Mr., Mrs. and Miss, but to the Chinese nothing so cut and dried. Instead, an ordinary Chinese wife is gracefully spoken of as Niejen "the interior person," because her place is in the home, while the helpmate of a highly placed gentleman is addressed as Fujen, or "lady." Chinese men love to have a title prefixed to their name. Plain Mr. is seldom used, for those who achieve professional stand-

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ing become "Lawyer," "Architect" and even "Artist" so-and-so, while big-wigs may be tagged "Cabinet Minister," "Director" or "Delegate." Little men bolster up their self-esteem with high-sounding if less glamorous titles—"Bus Conductor" Wu, "Street Cleaner" Chang. Those few unfortunate enough to go through life untitled are simply Shien-shang, the equivalent of Mr. but which, translated literally, means "before born."

If his father is dead, even the youngest husband is known as "Old Gentleman" (Lao Yeh) to his respectful wife and servants. But as long as the "Old Gentleman" lives his eldest son is called "Old Big" while the younger boys trail down the scale numerically as "Old Two," "Old Three," possibly "Old Ten." Their sisters also are formally identified by number: "Miss Two," "Miss Ten." The number system makes it easy to keep all offspring straight, since children of the same sex and generation must all share a given name as well as their last name. Sharing two names is simpler than it sounds. For instance my step-son and sons are, respectively, Koo Teh-chang, Koo Yu-chang and Koo Fu-chang. Before I married, my name was Oei Hui-lan and my sister's Oei Tjong-lan.

A Chinese starts life securely, with a definite code of etiquette to follow. Parents of a brand new baby announce the happy event by despatching a basketful of eggs to all their relations and friends. Eggs are cheap, so twenty to forty, hard-boiled and dyed a screaming scarlet, must be heaped in each basket. Curiously, the recipient is given no clue to the newcomer's sex since, boy or girl, the eggs are tinted the same. The excitement of distributing eggs is scarcely done before the parents are plunged into further and more expensive celebration. It is a social "must" to give a large very gala dinner precisely a month after the baby's birth, and

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no infant of any consequence is considered properly launched without this function.

Even family religion has its special social code. At both weddings and funerals the ancestral altar is placed in a conspicuous spot, and each guest on entering the house must kow-tow. Permitting a stranger to bow alone before the family ancestors would be the height of bad taste, so some masculine member of the family remains at the altar and kow-tows with each guest. At the mourning rites of my brother-in-law, the late Mr. V. S. Koo, my step-son and sons took over this duty, and long before the funeral ceremony commenced they were exhausted. In a surprisingly short time each of them had made a complete kow-tow, prostrating themselves flat on the floor, over two hundred times!

One of the minor niceties of Chinese life is giving the correct present at a propitious time. The cardinal rule of giving, which must never be ignored, is not to send presents singly or in odd numbers. It is unlucky, so two of any gift, no matter how cumbersome, must be despatched. And while a pair will do, it's far more chic to give two or more pairs. One of the most amusing occasions for gift-giving is on the fifteenth of the First Moon, when well-wishers send a lantern to any newly-married friends. The lantern is a gentle prod for the young couple to consummate their marital duty, for in the delicate nuances of the Chinese language the word for "lantern" and the word for "increasing the family" sound identical! Setting up a new household or even moving to another apartment is the signal for a shower of presents. However, if one wants to insult the mover, send him any kind of timepiece, even an ornamental wrist watch. This outwardly innocent gift not only conveys the subtle message: "Your time has come," but also the word for "clock," though

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written differently from its pronunciation, sounds the same as that for "threat of death!"

In China florists sell only plants. Flowers which are cut, and therefore considered dead, do not make an acceptable gift. When a present of flowers is made at least four pots must be sent, otherwise the sender is rated stingy. White flowers too, must be avoided, as they symbolize death. So if a Chinese lady were sent a corsage of gardenias it would be a terrible affront. There is one exception to both rules: Chinese women occasionally, and with perfect propriety, give each other small knots of jasmin to be worn in the hair.

Our Chinese party manners are wonderfully punctilious. We use *gay* red paper for calling cards and wedding invitations, while on every engraved invitation the host's as well as the guest's name is politely written by hand. Popularity complicates social life enormously. In China it is deemed the worst possible taste to refuse an invitation, and no matter how many dinners one is asked to the same evening, all must be accepted. Pleading a previous engagement is futile, for social alibis are simply non-existent. It was not unusual for Wellington to attend half a dozen dinners in one evening. Fortunately, seating arrangements are elastic at Chinese parties, so he could drop in for ten or fifteen minutes at a dinner, drink a bowl of soup or sample one course, then move on to another engagement.

A guest of honor is less footloose, and though he does not have to stay through the whole dinner, politeness demands that he remain until the shark's fins are served. The shark-fin course, gastronomic peak of any elaborate dinner, comes third or fourth in the usual array of sixteen courses, so the honored guest can easily take in several other dinners. The correct manipulation of knife and fork is child's play compared to chopsticks. As chopsticks come in contact only

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with the teeth, never the tongue, the same pair is used for all except the sweet courses, which are served in the middle of a meal and followed by four more solid dishes, usually meats of some kind surrounded by rice. During the meal they must always be laid together beside the plate and never balanced across a bowl.

A guest finishing first points his chopsticks at each of those still eating and says, "Eat slowly!" After they, in turn, have pointed back, he places the chopsticks side by side across his bowl, a gesture which indicates, "I am keeping you company!" So their guests will not feel impelled to hurry through the final course both host and hostess must be the last to finish eating. Then, on leaving, when a guest thanks the host, the latter exclaims sadly "Tai man! Tai man!" a deprecatory ejaculation meaning "I didn't do enough! I didn't treat you well!"

There are several superstitions about eating which most people carefully observe. A typical example is the word for "pear" which is pronounced the same as the word for "separation." Hence no husband and wife and no close friends would dream of sharing the same pear!

Serving tea is highly stylized. A guest is offered tea immediately on arrival, and as accompaniment, four sweet dishes, usually watermelon seeds, preserved walnuts, sweetened lotus and some sort of candy. A hostess may make a more extravagant display of sweets, but she never offers less than four or an uneven number of dishes. Tea is also the conventional bracer for business conferences. Before the session commences everyone quenches his thirst, then the cups are put aside. They are not touched until the host wishes his colleagues to depart, then he picks up his tea and swallows a perfunctory gulp. This signal, so gentle and polite, cannot

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be ignored, and everyone has to leave regardless of personal inclination.

The perfection of Chinese manners always delights me. Of the many exquisitely courteous sayings, one or two give me special pleasure. For instance instead of a brusque "Excuse me" we say "I borrow your light" or "I go in your shadow." When a friend has plumpened with good living we are not crude enough to comment, "Why, you've put on weight!" Instead we twist a compliment out of an unfortunate fact with a cheerful "You have certainly grown in luck!" or, "You have grown in fortune since I saw you last!"

The coming generation will know little of bound feet. This curious fashion originated centuries ago when some legendary emperor possessed a beautiful concubine with such small feet that she could dance on the palm of his hand. The emperor adored his concubine so passionately that he decreed, "Let all women in China imitate my loved one and have the tiniest of feet!" Thus doll-sized feet were artificially created, and Chinese women began to walk with a strange swaying gait. Though poets rhapsodized over this curious sensuous motion, comparing it to lilies bending in the breeze, bound feet kept Chinese women helpless and backward through hundreds of years. A child's feet were bound between the ages of four and eight, depending on how elegantly useless a mother wished her daughter to be. This process of merging the heel and ball of the foot hurt continuously and terribly. Little girls could not run around and play, they had to sit still and bear the pain as best they could. Later the stunted feet were made more conspicuous by slippers extravagantly trimmed with pearl embroidery and jade.

Another quaint custom which was dying gracefully when I reached China and vanished completely when the New Life Movement came into being, was the adoption of *ya-tohs*, or

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handmaidens. These tiny girls were taken from impoverished homes when they were about four or five years old, through a regular business transaction legalized by the child's father. These children were far better off than their sisters who remained at home. They were fed, clothed and, for the most part, treated with real affection. They never had to endure the nightmare struggle for existence which faces so many peasant families. The pattern of a ya-toh's life depended largely on the financial status of her foster family. In well-to-do households they were carefully brought up as personal companions; the less affluent trained them for domestic tasks. Handmaidens had a pleasant time in wealthy homes. Their duties were never arduous and they were prettily dressed in the mistress' last year's clothes with, perhaps, a giddy new creation for the festival season. There was no question of wages but the girls were always given small sums to jingle as pocket money. It was the correct thing to marry off a ya-toh at seventeen or eighteen. Naturally, willy-nilly they had to marry the man their mistress chose, but this was no real hardship as no Chinese girls were ever permitted to choose a husband. Ya-toh marriages were financed by a small dowry and once wed, the girl had no more responsibility towards her foster family. In spite of this the girls remained loyal and when old or widowed often returned to the childhood home. Occasionally, however, a mistress was mean or too lazy to find her handmaiden a husband. This was a tragedy as ya-tohs were helpless to venture out on their own. They just had to endure spinsterhood with the best grace possible.

Naturally many of the old customs I mention are disappearing rapidly. Influenced by the New Life Movement which the Generalissimo and Madame Chiang Kai-shek initiated a decade ago, important changes have taken place in the

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life, habits and social conventions of the Chinese people. The Chinese have made remarkable progress in readjusting themselves to the impact of occidental culture. And the pace is accelerating with the tempo of the times.

(19.)

Malayan Holiday

Before my father died in the summer of 1924, I visited him twice in Singapore, enjoying myself so thoroughly each time that I lingered there for months. When I first arrived my favorite tropical delicacy, the doerian, was just coming into season, and I scoured the city for these evil-smelling fruits. I had them delivered to my suite, which Papa had engaged in a small but stylish hotel, and instantly their strong, garlicky odor pervaded the whole establishment. The British hold up their hands in refined horror if the word "doerian" is mentioned, so the management, completely unnerved, begged me not to bring any more into the hotel. Although the request was not unreasonable, I refused to be

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dictated to and within the hour moved to the Raffles Hotel, an enormous caravanserai which has been glamourized in scores of romantic novels. Here I fairly purred with contentment. Two Chinese servants were detailed to wait on me. The manager, learning my antipathy towards foreign cooking, detailed a chef to prepare special Malay dishes in which coconut, garlic and spices were the exciting ingredients.

In Singapore social life centered around Government House, so an invitation from the governor general and his lady was tantamount to a royal command. Naturally Papa was upset to learn that I had been napping when His Excellency's aide-de-camp called with an invitation to Government House. "Won't you accept at once?" he inquired anxiously. I replied loftily that I had no intention of accepting unless he was also invited. As I had suggested that a mutual friend drop a hint to the A.D.C., I was certain the invitation would arrive.

When it came, Papa was delighted, and the morning of the momentous occasion he sent Lady Guillemard, the governor general's wife, a stupendous basket of cultivated orchids. That evening, en route to the dinner, I stopped for Papa at his bungalow. I had on my loveliest jade bracelets but Papa, wanting me to outshine everyone, was distressed because I was not festooned with diamonds.

"Well, Papa," I said sarcastically, "my few stones are locked up in Peking and even if I strung them all on I'd hardly be ablaze." Ignoring my attempt at humor, he fussed, "We must find some way to get you a few decent pieces of jewelry." Would I mind wearing his concubine's jewels, he asked; then, after a panic of indecision, he decided it was more fitting to borrow from a daughter-in-law. When we finally drove past the Sikh sentries and up the winding drive

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to Government House, Papa seemed content with my splashing earrings and the fine cluster of diamonds at my breast.

It was a large dinner, the guests including several British generals and their wives, important Sir Robert Ho-tung of Hong Kong, a sprinkling of lesser officials and of handsome young aides-de-camp. Lady Guillemard had scarcely thanked Papa for the orchids, which were posed in solitary splendor atop the piano, when the governor general and his staff entered the room. Everyone rose. I had my back to the door, and never having seen His Excellency, wondered idly about the small man who circled the room, a piece of paper in his hand, scanning the face of each guest. As he seemed to accompany a magnificent creature in white linen garlanded lavishly with gold braid, I asked myself who he could be. It was a real shock when I realized he was the Governor General of the Straits Settlement.

As the dinner progressed I glanced across the table at Papa. He looked happy and content, yet he scarcely could have been having a stimulating time, as he spoke little English and it was considered undignified to converse with British officialdom in Malay! Before leaving I invited the Guillemards and several of their guests to luncheon. Papa, I knew, was on mental tip-toe to catch their reply. His Excellency had a previous engagement, but when Lady Guillemard promptly accepted for herself Papa was quite visibly delighted.

The luncheon in honor of Lady Guillemard was given at Tajong Katong, a bathing resort near the city where wealthy Chinese built their country villas. Papa's attractive cottage, which had been closed for several years, was opened especially for my party. Papa was not present, for he felt his scanty English would ruin our fun. But he amused himself by ordering a dazzling succession of English and Chinese

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dishes from the best caterer in Singapore. Lady Guillemard motored me to Tajong Katong in her car. Her arrival at the Raffles Hotel was most conspicuous, and afterwards the snobbish management almost turned handsprings to please me! Out on the beach, Papa's superb banquet vanished with flattering rapidity, and my English guests obviously enjoyed themselves.

I tried to persuade Papa to return to Peking. The idea pleased him for he was anxious to see the palace he had given me. But business affairs always intervened and he never could get away.

My farewell gesture was a dinner in Papa's honor. Papa's sisters and their husbands, several of his sons, and my cousins, the two young doctors Lim accepted. I took a private dining room in Singapore's best Chinese restaurant. Our consul general helped me select a display of fireworks and engage entertainers. We picked out dancers and jugglers, and he chose six of the prettiest sing-song girls in town. The girls were told to concentrate all their wiles on Papa and give him a good time. They succeeded marvelously, hovering about Papa, pouring his tea, feeding him nuts and sweetmeats. They sang gay songs and flirted outrageously. Papa, was enchanted. And I overheard him ask the most alluring of the sextette to pay him a call at his bungalow the following day! I never knew whether the sing-song girls kept the appointment.

It was dawn when we were ready to leave. I asked for the bill, but Papa forestalled me. One of his sons signed the check and the tips must have been in Papa's most prodigal style, for when the proprietor bowed us out an ecstatic grin stretched from ear to ear.

I returned to Singapore soon after the birth of my second son. In the brief interim between visits Wellington had at-

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tained such political prominence throughout the Far East that the British authorities assigned me a bodyguard. I was not in the slightest danger and accepted this precautionary measure as a compliment. Papa, spotting my "shadow" immediately, teased me and boasted that I was safer with him than with a squad of British detectives.

"I've invented a fool-proof system for insuring my personal safety," he chuckled. Then I remembered that Papa's nonchalant solo peregrinations about Singapore had always puzzled me for many far less wealthy men, afraid of kidnappers, scarcely dared move from their homes without a covey of guards. His "system" was simple, effective—and very expensive. Papa singled out the leader of Singapore's most powerful gang and paid him a fixed sum for protection against all lesser fry. Alive, Papa was worth his weight in gold, dead, he was valueless. When a gang's power waned, shrewdly Papa swapped gangsters.

A remarkable Indian fortune teller chanced to be in Singapore at this time. Sir Reginald Stubbs, the governor of Hong Kong, and Lady Stubbs, who entertained me on my way to and from Peking, first told me about Professor Kumara Swami. The Swami had read the fortunes of the Prince of Wales, the Crown Prince of Germany, Lord Louis Mountbatten and countless less dazzling personages. Years before, in Ceylon, he had predicted that Sir Reginald would soon be raised from a colonial secretary to a governor. The promotion, which was a surprising jump in rank, materialized almost immediately. Later, literal-minded Sir Reginald, half believing in the fortune teller's powers, let him attempt to cure his ailing son. The cure consisted chiefly of a series of ceremonial prayers and the governor, whose father was a bishop, felt a trifle guilty. But he quieted his misgivings by reasoning that prayers, no matter how unconventional, could

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scarcely harm his boy. Much to Sir Reginald's astonishment, the sick child began to improve under the Swami's ministrations. After listening to the governor's tales I was anxious to have the Indian tell my fortune. However, his price proved too steep for my pocketbook, so just before I left, Papa himself arranged a rendezvous. The Swami, lean, swarthy, his head wrapped in an untidy turban, arrived precisely as the clock struck the hour. Brusquely omitting all the usual preliminaries, he urged Papa to leave Singapore.

"If you do not quit this city within the year—" he paused dramatically, "you never will!" Continuing in the same mysterious vein, the Swami told of subtle plots against Papa and claimed that he could name the conspirator. Almost facetiously Papa demanded proof. The Indian, his face grave, ignored Papa and asked me for a glass of water and a blank piece of paper. I followed instructions, folding the paper and dipping it in the glass. Gripped tightly between my fingers I held the sheet submerged until the Swami signalled. I unfolded it gingerly. Printed neatly in the center of the creased page was a name I knew only too well. I screamed with horror. Papa glanced at the writing and smiled.

"This is quite impossible," he said calmly. "She benefits far more by keeping me alive!" Besides, he added confidently, a dozen Chinese fortune tellers had prophesied him a lusty old age. The Swami, angered by Papa's disbelief, replied stiffly, "I have not lied to you! Even though you pay me nothing I cannot alter a word I have said!"

The next night I sailed for home. Papa remained with me until all the other passengers had gone ashore. He seemed more than usually reluctant to have me leave. My boat steamed part way down the harbor, then halted to wait the rising tide. Tired out, I was undressing when someone

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knocked on my cabin door. It was Papa, all breathless with delight. He had hired a launch and hurried after me. We sat together peacefully, hand in hand, until the shadows deepened. At last my ship weighed anchor and slipped across the bar. I never saw my father again. He died of a sudden and mysterious heart attack several months later.

(20.)

Eunuchs and Such

Peking has been the Manchu capital ever since their tribes swept down from the wild northern steppes three hundred years ago. They swarmed into the city, elbowing out the Chinese, until a great part of Peking's population became Manchu. Though the two races lived side by side for centuries, the Manchus remained aloof from the Chinese and kept their distinctive characteristics intact. Most prominent Manchus, as well as thousands of the humble, enjoyed some official connection with their Imperial Court and in 1911, when the Manchu dynasty fell, the aristocratic families started to disintegrate rapidly. The Republican government ignored them in the distribution of new posts and thus many

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of them lost their livelihood. Naturally extravagant and totally lacking in business acumen, their private fortunes had already vanished when I came to Peking.

Through Princess Yu, one of the few Manchus who circulated in foreign circles, I met many of her intimates. I sought the Manchus first out of curiosity, later because I found them charming. Traditional Chinese politeness paled to insignificance compared with the Manchus' courtly manners. The ceremonious Manchu greeting was enchanting. The women dipped three graceful curtsies to each other, the men half knelt and swiftly touched their right hand to the ground.

The Manchu ladies, by nature taller than the Chinese, wore extraordinary footgear which added several inches to their height. Their feet were never bound and the Manchu shoes, fashioned in bright silks, have an exaggeratedly high heel placed precisely in mid-center of the sole, leaving toe and heel totally unsupported. The Manchu coiffure and head-dress, which was then being slowly abandoned, is equally fantastic. The front hair, parted in the center, is piled atop the head while the back loops shoulder length in a boat-shaped "bun." Few possessed sufficient hair for this complicated arrangement, so the knot was often made of false hair or even strands of black silk. The finishing touch is a long, silk-covered ruler, run horizontally through the "bun," its ends massed with artificial flowers and pearl tassels which swung to and fro with every motion. The Manchu robe is one piece, loosely fitting, slit briefly at the sides and usually more elaborately embroidered than our jackets.

The most fascinating of the younger Manchu ladies was petite Mme. Pu, sister-in-law of the Boy Emperor. She came often to our palace and was an exquisitely improbable sight in her shimmering Manchu robe and exotic head-dress. At that time the Boy Emperor, who later was given the

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foreign name of Henry Pu-yi, still resided in the Forbidden City and though shorn of power by the Republicans, was allowed to retain his title. It was tragically incongruous that he lived, a mere figurehead surrounded by a skeleton court, within a stone's throw of China's president who, in an adjacent Imperial Palace, ruled as Emperor without title. Yet this confusing situation of Emperor and President, almost cheek to jowl, persisted thirteen years.

Most Manchus lived inconspicuously, almost furtively, in Pekin's Tartar City. Their houses were usually shabby, but always spotless, for cleanliness is a fetish with Manchus. As they grew progressively poorer they sold jewels first, then furniture, robes, and furs but never, short of actual starvation, could they be induced to part with their magnificent Pekinese dogs. My new Manchu friends, knowing I owned several "Pekes" and was anxious to buy others, often refused to show me their pets unless I promised first not to tempt them to sell.

I envied the Manchus their beautiful dogs because, curiously enough, it was almost impossible to purchase a thoroughbred Pekinese in Peking. My pets had been acquired in England and though it seemed like carrying coals to Newcastle, my newest Peke, a present from Sir Hugo Cunliffe-Owen, head of the British Tobacco Company, journeyed solo all the way from London to Peking. Few people know that Pekinese dogs were evolved by the Forbidden City eunuchs. Legend insists that an ancient Emperor clamored for a dog intelligent as a monkey, brave as a lion, yet possessing the pop-eyes and flowing tail of his favorite goldfish. The eunuchs, anxious to please their master, interbred a variety of species until they obtained one which satisfied the Emperor's difficult specifications. It was a truly Imperial dog for his descendants were bred only in the Forbidden City and no one, ex-

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cept Manchus of royal court circles were permitted to own a Pekinese. The dogs became an obsession with the succeeding Emperors. One ruler actually bestowed the title of Imperial Duke on his Pekinese and, to keep the tiny creature in delectable tidbits, assigned him the full revenue of a Dukedom. This pug-nosed, four-legged Duke possessed a chair cushioned in Imperial Yellow, a color reserved exclusively for the Emperor and, after a memorable life, was buried in the sacred royal tombs.

Not until comparatively recent times did the Pekinese become known in Europe. The ancestors of all European Pokes were purloined undoubtedly by some venal eunuch. When the Manchu dynasty was abolished officially, less than a third of the three thousand palace eunuchs remained in the Forbidden City. The others, dismissed, stole many of the dogs, and the rest were given to Manchus formerly connected with the Imperial Court.

Some of the eunuchs forced out of the Forbidden City returned to their distant homes or sought refuge in monasteries. But the majority, having no place to go, drifted about Peking. Since they had lived in a protected atmosphere where opportunities for "squeeze" abounded and competition was non-existent, these eunuchs were helpless in the outside world. The palace eunuchs had been divided into three distinct classes. The highest had the honor of serving the Emperor personally; the less important were responsible for safeguarding palace buildings and treasures, while the "little" eunuchs performed menial household tasks, since only maidservants were employed in the Forbidden City. The "little" eunuchs suffered most by their expulsion. Their resources were meagre and they eked out a scanty living as itinerant musicians, dishwashers, coolies and, quite frequently, as proficient masseurs. I learned to admire this

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skill when my baby son broke his arm. After the plaster cast was removed, an X-ray revealed a badly knit bone. To straighten the arm the Rockefeller Institute doctors decided it must be broken again and re-set, but they reckoned without our Manchu amah. She held no brief for new-fangled operations and insisted I call in a masseur. As he trotted into the house, a bundle of fragrant herbs tucked underarm, his appearance scarcely inspired confidence. He was small, wrinkled like a dried apple and his tremolo voice grated on the nerves. He set to work briskly, applying steaming poultices, then gently manipulating the tiny arm. He came every day and within a week the improvement was apparent. After two months' treatment, Fu-chang's arm was as flexible as ever. The Institute doctors, amazed, admitted that an operation was superfluous.

All foreign residents in Peking had a mania for collecting Chinese treasures but being Chinese I usually managed to outstrip them. I loved to haggle and found it exhilarating to drive a hard bargain. I bought every piece of really beautiful jade I could find, sought the most exquisite carpets and embroideries, and searched patiently for a special kind of porcelain plate. In a casual way I also picked up Chinese paintings. My favorites were two signed Sixteenth Century paintings, given me by Chinese friends and considered priceless rarities. On one silken scroll the most delicate black and white tracery had been executed solely with a finger; the other, even more finely detailed, had been painted by tongue!

At first I made many mistakes but I learned, step by step, from experience. I peppered dealers with questions, inspected my friends' collections critically and handled countless jades, innumerable pieces of porcelain. Every free

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moment I wandered up and down Jade Street, a narrow lane outside of the Ch'ien Mien gate in the shopping quarter. Lining the street were more than two hundred shops, each stacked higgledy-piggledy with jade, carnelian, snuff bottles, coral, bits of porcelain, pearls, and diamonds. I ransacked the shops in Embroidery Street too, but though these small booths were fascinating, no important purchases were ever made in public. The dealers concealed real treasures from trippers and everyday shoppers, preferring to display them in private houses. No matter how anxious a dealer might be to make a sale, he would never call on a prospective customer without first punctiliously obtaining an introduction.

There is endless variety and excitement in collecting jade. Jade, to be worthy of a connoisseur's attention, must be several hundred years old. All Han Dynasty jade and much of the valuable green jade is dug up from centuries-old tombs. The rosy tinge, which adds so much to the beauty of green jade, is supposedly absorbed from the dead! This explains why Han jade, found in graves two thousand years old, has turned from its original green to a rich, brownish red. The newly mined stone is worth very little because it lacks the wonderful translucence which only comes from being buried in the earth a long, long time.

Imperial emerald jade is most prized for jewelry. Modern necklaces of Imperial jade are strung from beads once worn by ancient Mandarins. Since these chains denoted the Mandarin's high, official position, it was natural for the dignified old gentlemen to wear these ornaments to their graves. Age endows this jade with an emerald's brilliancy and a rare piece is as costly as the precious stone. It cannot easily be confused with a less exalted variety but an infallible test is to place a piece of jade in a water-filled porcelain bowl; then,

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if it is emerald jade, the water will glow green as the sea. Necklaces like the one I was able to obtain reach half way to the waist and today are considered priceless collectors' items. A pair of Imperial jade bracelets, which are carved in one circular piece, could range in price from three hundred to thirty thousand dollars, depending on the beauty of color and the lack of flaws. These antique bracelets, so fantastically valuable, were cut painstakingly with the grain, then polished endlessly with jade powder. They are so small that only the slimmest, most subtle hand may squeeze through the rigid circle. Since in China everything is bought in twos, an unmated bracelet, no matter how beautiful, is worth only a fraction of what a pair would cost. My first year in Peking I was fortunate enough to find two pairs of bracelets. Their value is tremendous but of more consequence to me is the fact they can never be duplicated. Even more lovely, in my opinion, though intrinsically less costly, are my bracelets of palest green delicately spotted with mauve.

Knowing jade, I am convinced, is instinctive. I once asked Tang Shao-yi, my husband's former father-in-law and the most famous porcelain connoisseur in China, how he distinguished between the old and the new. It was as easy for him, he replied, as it would be for me to tell the difference between a young woman and an old. The difference in porcelains, he claimed, was equally distinct. But Tang Shao-yi's discrimination was largely visual while my instinct for jade is half visual, half tactual.

The most interesting piece of jade in my collection is a green pepper. The pepper is long and thick as my thumb, completely translucent and without the slightest flaw to mar its remarkable beauty. For countless years it was rated as one of the Manchu Dynasty treasures. The young Empress smuggled the pepper out of the Forbidden City when

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she left to join her husband, the Boy Emperor, in Tien-tsin. I bought it unobtrusively through the medium of an American friend. The pepper's perfection is quite beyond price and no true lover of jade could bear to part with it. Later I had Cartier put a diamond clasp on the pepper stem so I can hang it on a chain. The only other pepper in any way similar is owned by Sir Victor Sassoon one of the wealthiest foreign land owners in Shanghai. He always carried the pepper in his waistcoat pocket and at a dinner given by Lord and Lady Wellington, he showed it to me proudly. I examined it minutely, agreed the jade was marvelous but, on holding it up to the strong light, I noticed a tiny flaw! Though the piece was singularly translucent, the tip had a white spot, so well blended it was scarcely noticeable. The flaw had indeed escaped Sir Victor's sharp eye and this oversight must have annoyed him. I learned later that he had commissioned several dealers, regardless of price, to find a pepper as perfect as mine.

During our years in Peking, Wellington worked most of the time at high pressure. His sole moments of real relaxation were deep-sea fishing jaunts during those summer months we spent at Pei-ta-ho or long walking trips through the beautiful Western Hills. Accompanied by a congenial friend and trailed at a respectful distance by a file of nimble donkeys loaded with bedding and food, Wellington would tramp for two or three days. There were no hotels so they slept in the temples which were scattered about the countryside. There were literally hundreds of Buddhist temples, many abandoned, others, the most convenient to Peking, had been transformed into week-end cottages. Those still in everyday use were meticulously cared for by Bonzos, the

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foreign name for priests, who delighted in company and needed no urging to exhibit their treasures. Each temple had its particular god who squatted aloof in an outer vestibule. The inner door was flanked by lesser temple gods, fierce-faced, gigantic and threatening, while in the darkling interior the silken altar tapestries glowed mother-of-pearl in the faint light of fluttering candles.

As a week-end escape from the formality of official life most of the diplomats and a few Chinese rented temples. Our lovely temple, once a hunting lodge of the Manchu emperors, was perched high on the Western Hills, a forty-minute climb from the automobile road on foot, by donkey, or by chair. Every scrap of food was brought from Peking and the only water supply was a well, two miles distant. All day long a water-coolie, yoked with buckets, plodded back and forth endlessly over the rocky path.

Among the more distant temples our favorite was the Temple of the Black Dragon under the shadow of the Great Wall, an enchanting spot with a clear heaven-blue pool overhung by luxuriant wisteria. Here we chatted hours on end with the priests and they in turn questioned us about events which had happened twenty, thirty, and even forty years before. News of the world stirred them profoundly. They had few opportunities of conversing with outsiders since, in these faraway temples the rare visitor was usually a foreigner unable to speak their language. One priest confided that he had not spoken with a stranger in twelve years and we found many completely unaware that the Manchus no longer ruled China.

The Bonzos were frugal by necessity. Vegetarians, they counted themselves fortunate if they could depend on a single daily meal. Yet despite their poverty no priest would accept a tip and we could repay hospitality only by leaving them

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our leftover sugar, tea, and vegetables. They invariably refused our meat, and this we gave to our chair-bearers.

Some of the most delicious hours in my life were spent in these dream-like temples. Under old, old trees, we sat in the courtyards through candle-lit twilights. The priests' chanting rose and fell, rippling in soothing cadence through air heavy with pungent incense and the lush scent of flowers. And at intervals, through long hours, the temple gongs throbbed mysteriously in the warm silence.

(21.)

Honor the Dead

A few days before Papa's death, I had two curious, dreadfully distinct nightmares. I dreamt that my palace was surrounded by soldiers carrying drawn bayonets, and in Wellington's drawing room a weird creature, half pig, half goat, lay dead. I awoke terrified and dozed off to dream more mildly that I had lost a large molar tooth. The dreams were so vivid that I tried to describe them to my husband. But Wellington, immersed in his breakfast tea, cut me short. Later he was to know them well for the same nightmares haunted me again and again, each time before some terrible calamity befell me or mine.

There was ample time for me to get to Singapore for

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Papa's funeral, since unlike occidentals the Chinese do not bury their dead immediately. In China a funeral may be postponed for months until an auspicious burial day is determined. Either a priest or a sage is consulted, and by complicated ritual they calculate not only the day but the very hour in which the coffin is to be lowered into the ground. Before leaving Peking I cabled Mama in London, asking if she intended to return for the funeral. Her reply was completely logical: as Papa was already dead there was no need for her to come.

I went straight to my father's bungalow. The coffin, hidden beneath voluminous draperies, was set in the center of the main room. It was an awful moment. I remembered Papa, such a short time ago so alive and waving good-bye gaily from the bobbing launch. Now he was hidden from my sight and jealousy guarded by relatives whom I disliked. The tables were turned—I was the intruder, they the ones who dominated.

After my arrival in Singapore the burial arrangements were completed. Papa wished no elaborate religious ceremonies, no priests, no public display. He was to lie beside his father in Semarang. His sons were to accompany the coffin to Java on a specially chartered ship while the members of my party as well as the concubine and her five children travelled on the regular Dutch steamer. An American friend, whom I had invited for companionship, my secretary and I left the boat at Batavia and motored leisurely to Semarang. I had not been in Java for five years and I was pleased to return, even on such a sad mission. Java was as unchanged, as enchanting as ever. We stopped at the great Buitzenborg conservatories where the world's most fabulous collection of orchids is grown; we climbed extinct volcanos to peer into their fantastic craters, and slept beneath thick blankets in

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chilly mountain resorts. I found time once again to bathe in those delicious pools hidden away in the high forests.

While I motored peacefully a teapot tempest was brewing in Semarang, though fortunately I knew nothing about it until long afterwards. Usually family funerals are conventional affairs but Papa's domestic life had been so involved naturally friction developed. The various relations were squabbling bitterly over precedence at the funeral ceremony. My half-brother, sticking to formal etiquette, had decided that I, as representative of the widow, should follow first behind the coffin. The Singapore faction objected strenuously to this plan, insisting that theirs was the most important rôle. Finally my eldest half-brother punctured their pretensions by announcing flatly that if I did not take precedence, then his mother, as senior member of the family, outranked all others.

The funeral morning we rose before dawn and went silently to the wharf where the ship bearing my father's body was to dock. A large crowd, which had been waiting hours on the pier, stood hushed and solemn. In the dim light I recognized relations and nebulous family connections whose names I had long since forgotten. There were dozens of Papa's clerks in their gleaming starched jackets, house servants in batik turbans and coolies from the sugar plantations. I glimpsed my artist uncle wandering uncertainly through the press of people; ranged along the dock were the women folk and their children. They were all dressed in mourning garments of raw unbleached cotton covered with sackcloth. I alone did not wear conventional mourning, as married daughters belong to their husband's family and wear sackcloth only out of respect for their in-laws.

The crowd almost as one person audibly caught its breath when the funeral barge loomed suddenly through the morn-

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ing mist. The whole boat was draped in black, and the coffin, peaked like a miniature temple, was raised on a high dais. Four sons, like spectral guards in their sackcloth robes, stood at each corner of the catafalque. A hearse drawn by four horses caped in black was waiting. As the coffin was brought ashore the sun pierced the haze impatiently. The cortège followed, eight sons going two by two on foot, the women in slow-moving automobiles, while hundreds, ignoring the throbbing heat, shuffled uncomplainingly through billows of stifling dust.

Forty Javanese, with batik sarongs twisted about their muscular thighs, strained to carry the top-heavy coffin up the long sweep of granite stairs between the grassy terraces which my grandfather had planted with such meticulous care. Papa's coffin was lowered into a grave beside his father. As I stood there, spent with the heat, waiting for my eldest half-brother to toss in the first spadeful of earth, I became aware that an old woman had pushed close to me and was trying to place a tiny parcel in my hand. She whispered shyly that the packet contained my father's false teeth, which he had entrusted to her keeping. They were part of him, and would I, his daughter, throw them into my father's grave? Swiftly I placed the package on the coffin, and she ducked her head in thanks. She lingered timidly beside me, so I asked her who she was. I stooped to catch her reply, for her voice was almost inaudible. She was Papa's first love and he had seen to her comfort all her life.

According to my father's desire, there were no priests at the burial and after the grave had been smoothed we burnt joss sticks at an altar which had been specially erected for the occasion. Then we kow-towed one by one in ceremonious farewell. But the funeral was by no means over. During the following week all of us remained secluded in our old house

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while the final burial rites were being observed. The rites were simple, at certain intervals we burned joss sticks and repeated prayers at the family altar.

The Chinese community was anxious to entertain me while I remained in Semarang. As I could not accept invitations to visit their houses, they sent me food of every imaginable variety. The house was literally inundated with fruit, cakes and the most extravagant delicacies. Each day I had to distribute the harvest among my relations and the servants. Then too, all the wealthy Chinese in Semarang owned handsome motor cars, and out of courtesy generously offered them to me. Every morning a dozen or more automobiles drew up outside the house and remained parked there throughout the day, whether I used them or not. Whenever I stepped outside the door all the chauffeurs would make a dive for me and practically knock me off my feet in their anxiety to have the privilege of driving me about town. To avoid causing jealousy I exercised great diplomatic skill and used the cars in careful rotation.

Shortly before my departure I visited the country house which my grandfather had built near his mausoleum. The house was then, and so far as I know, is still beautifully kept up by the income of a trust fund my grandfather set up. It is reserved exclusively for the use of members of the Oei family. Any Oei may draw upon this fund whenever necessary.

Another funeral I shall never forget was my mother-in-law's. Madame Koo died in 1930 while I was spending the spring in Spain. After hurrying half around the world Wellington met me in Harbin with the disconcerting news that a three months' postponement of the funeral rites had been

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determined by the priests. So we proceeded leisurely to Pei-ta-ho, to mark time in our summer cottage. Eventually we were summoned to Shanghai. On our way south we stopped to pick up my step-son at his school in Tien-tsin, then started downriver in a small steamer. I had scarcely unpacked my toothbrush before we smacked into a monster typhoon. For four dreadful days we bucked savagely through the swirling yellow waters. Limp from sea-sickness, I was tossed about like a rag doll and was more dead than alive when we finally staggered into Shanghai. I had to pull myself together immediately, clamber into a prickly sackcloth mourning robe and drive straight to my mother-in-law's house.

For over three months the coffin had stood in the front hall just a few paces from the door. It was surrounded by Buddhist priests, who neither moved a muscle nor skipped a beat in their incessant chanting as we crossed the threshold. This was the second day of the funeral, and the family had scarcely budged from the room since the ceremony had begun. They were lined up stiffly on uncompromising wooden chairs; my sisters-in-law, my kind brother-in-law and all their children.

Madame Koo was to be buried at Kiating, her summer home many miles down the Yangtse from Shanghai. Her body was to travel on a special barge while we were to follow by train. A few hours after our arrival the elaborate cortège gathered at the house and then coiled slowly through the narrow streets to the waterfront. Leading the procession were more than a score of professional "carriers," men hired for all grand funerals and dressed alike in ceremonial jackets. Some held small altars on which photographs of my mother-in-law were displayed, the others carried her most prized personal possessions—embroidered robes, sable-lined coats

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and lovely pieces of jewelry. Behind them swayed the top-heavy hearse followed by a file of relations pallid as ghosts in their cotton garments.

After the coffin was placed on the barge we returned to Madame Koo's house to rest until train time. Her servants were lined up solemnly on the door-step and offered us bowls of fragrant lichee juice. Before entering we drank the sweet syrup dutifully, to symbolize that having passed through bitterness we could now expect sweetness.

Some hours later we left the train at a small station near Kiating. From here we were to go in rickshas to the river and board a small local boat, which would fall in behind the funeral barge and follow it to the burial place. Besides my step-son we were accompanied by two servants and half a dozen bodyguards. The bodyguards left us without a shred of privacy and were a terrible nuisance, but it was considered a wise precaution for anyone as well known as Wellington when travelling about the countryside without protection. They were useful on occasions, however, and I made them do considerable leg work in running errands.

Our dilapidated rickshas bounced through country lanes interminably. Finally we all crowded onto a houseboat. It was a primitive sampan devoid of any comfort, yet the only home of a flourishing river family. At sun-down it turned cold and I huddled miserably in my rug. After a long time the funeral barge rounded a bend in the river and our sampan hustled to get in line.

Ahead of the coffin we stumbled along a muddy foot path to the Koo mausoleum. The other members of the family had arrived earlier and were waiting in the sepulchral dimness of an ante-room. We learned with dismay that the priests had decided upon four A.M. as the auspicious hour for burial. It was scarcely ten o'clock and there was nothing to do but

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wait for the sunrise. So the women retired into one tiny room, the men to another. My servants improvised a bed from boards, covered it with my rug and in some mysterious way produced a cup of piping hot tea and a handful of dry biscuits. Before settling down, I peeked into the adjoining room. The men were propped uncomfortably against the walls, through the gloom I could see Wellington stretched out on a few planks, his bodyguards like huge frogs squatting in a circle around him.

My mother-in-law was buried in the chilly dawn, and in our crumpled sackcloth robes we performed the last rites automatically, numb with fatigue and cold. It was seven o'clock before the last spadeful of earth was placed on her grave.

Returning, we could find only two rickshas. So we went slowly along the slippery paths, my step-son and the bodyguards floundering beside us, down to the houseboat and, eventually, back to Shanghai.

PART FOUR

Bombs and Bombast



(22.)

Politics Paramount

During the lively political confusion of the Twenties many unique personages made their way to Peking. To me the most intriguing was the Panshan Lama, whom I never set eyes on, though I was his guest at tea! This exceedingly holy man rules from his lamasery at Tashilumpo, which was only two hundred and fifty miles as the crow flies from Lhasa, the Dalai Lama's capital, yet an eight-day pony ride over the wild Tibetan mountains. It had taken him four months to travel from Tashilumpo to Peking, where he settled down in a fine government-owned palace and was guarded with as much pomp as the Pope. The Panshan Lama had quarrelled bitterly with the Dalai Lama and had left Tibet in protest

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to seek refuge in Peking. He stayed away for more than a decade and in 1934, when I last heard of him, His Holiness was living in Nanking, while a deputation of Tibetan priests was reported en route to plead with him to return.* His long absence from Tibet was a great calamity. The two lamas are co-heirs of the sacred Buddhist inheritance, and to the Tibetans the Panshan is considered more worthy of veneration than the much more publicized Dalai Lama, because his functions are less worldly. He is supposed to be the re-incarnation of the Bodhisattva Manjusri and is responsible for the maintenance of purity in all religious doctrines, while the Dalai Lama's duty is merely the temporal rule of the Tibetan realm.

Wellington had the honor to be invited to several personal audiences with the Panshan Lama. He was a man between fifty-five and sixty and, like most Tibetans, swarthy, slightly pock-marked, with handsome white teeth. At his personal invitation I went to pay my respects at his palace. He was, of course, far too holy to receive a mere woman, so the "party," minus its host, was a curious affair. I was entertained by his subordinates, yellow-robed priests with shaved heads, who scuffed about in sandals. After a somewhat desultory conversation, refreshments were brought in. The *pièce de résistance* was Tibetan tea, a nauseating concoction of strong broth flavored with a huge lump of rancid yak butter. To refuse this delicacy would have been a gross affront to His Holiness' hospitality. So to please my substitute hosts, who watched me with an intentness which I suspected was strongly tinged with sadism, I put on a good act and swallowed the nasty stuff in two great gulps.

Perhaps as a reward for my courage and good manners, the Panshan Lama sent me an assortment of gifts the follow-

* Since these lines were written, the Panshan Lama has died.

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ing day. They included dozens of Tibetan religious scrolls, bundles of incense and several rolls of scarlet Tibetan silk. The silk was almost transparent and though it was only a foot wide, several hundred yards were wound on each roll.

The first members of European royalty to visit Republican China were the Crown Prince and Princess of Sweden. Their arrival in Peking caused wide interest, and though their trip was unofficial, great preparations were made to entertain them. At Wellington's request I postponed a journey to see Mama, who was ill in Paris, and busied myself with arrangements. We engaged the best suite at the Peking Hotel. I bought new uniforms for my chauffeur and footman and put my "Crystal Palace" Rolls-Royce at the disposal of the prince and the princess. My new drawing room, built as a connecting link between the eastern and western palaces, was completed in time for me to "christen" it at an entertainment for the royal guests. This huge room opened into the Blue Salon, which I had transformed into a dining room for official functions. I chose gold tea-paper for the walls and personally designed the fireplace, which was shaped like a Moon Gate. For its facing I smashed hundreds of colorful porcelain bowls and showed the masons how to cement the pieces into a pattern which delighted my eye. The furniture was antique lacquer, and hanging from the ceiling were eight priceless lanterns bought out of the Imperial Palace in Jehol. At least two yards in circumference, they were shaved to thin transparency, and strips of brightly colored horn were appliquéd in ornamental designs. From the carved lacquer tops hung amazing red silk tassels eight feet long, studded with enamelled plaques, imitation pearls and smaller green tassels. My Sixteenth-Century rugs,

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brought from a Tibetan monastery, were faded orchid, threaded with gold.

Their Royal Highnesses had scarcely arrived when protocol complications set in. The problem which worried experts was whether the crown prince or my husband should call on the other first. Wellington, then prime minister of the regency cabinet, was equivalent to the head of state, but the prince could hardly be expected to leave his visiting card at our house. Finally, the question was neatly scotched, the crown prince and my husband signed simultaneously in each other's visiting book, and the official calls were considered paid.

Our entertainment for the royal couple was a great success. Forty-eight dined in my Blue Dining Room; the courtyard was decorated with colored lanterns, and a strip of red carpet was laid and Chinese musicians stationed outside to signal the arrival of our royal guests. When I dropped a deep curtsy to the prince and the princess, my Chinese friends were amazed. They had never seen anyone except a Manchu curtsy and not knowing how to dip gracefully, they greeted the royal Swedes with awkward Western handshakes.

The prince and princess were easier to entertain than we imagined. The princess was content to shop, and her husband, whose passion was archeology, inspected the excavations near Peking.

Though civil wars came and went, though cabinets fell and presidents were rudely dismissed, Peking's diplomatic circle gyrated unperturbed. A bachelor diplomat was a prize to be struggled for; there were only two in Peking and no party was complete without one of them. Senhor Bianchi, the new Portuguese minister and Baron Guillaume, then

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Counsellor of the Belgian Legation and now his country's Ambassador to China, were each tall and handsome. Inevitably, several ladies fell victim to their charm. At a legation dinner, a victim whose age was decidedly uncertain, made an obvious but unsuccessful play for attention. When the Belgian minister and I began to tease, urging a more cordial response, our friend replied tartly that the lady was too ripe for his taste. The minister chuckled drily, "Mon ami, les meilleurs potages sont cuit dans les vieux marmitons!" (My dear boy, don't you know the best broths are brewed in old pots!)

It was hard to remember, living in the luxury and heedless spending of Peking's official circles, that frugality is the most typical Chinese virtue. We were reminded of this sterling quality occasionally by stories which went the round of Peking's finest drawing rooms. Of a vast collection two are worth re-telling.

The two richest families of a small village were known throughout the countryside for their avarice. At festival time they exchanged calls and, according to local custom, gave each other presents of foodstuffs. At a certain festival the head of one of the families made his neighborly call just at dawn, leaving his presents with a younger son, the only person awake at such an ungodly hour. The presents, uniquely economical substitutes, were mere drawings of fish, meat and vegetables. The son was disgusted with this new low in generosity, but his father, apparently delighted, chortled happily, "Well, paper and pencils cost money, you know. These presents are expensive, we must treasure them!" When it came time to reciprocate the son hit on a brilliant idea. He trotted off to do the honors and on his return said proudly to his father, "I didn't spend a cent! I just made a gesture and said 'I'm giving you a large cake!'" He held

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his hands wide to show the mythical cake's size. The son waited expectantly for praise, but to his dismay the father turned on him angrily. "You extravagant fool!" he shouted, "couldn't you have made a smaller-sized gesture?"

The second story tells about a prosperous but stingy man at a country fair. Half the evening he paced up and down in front of a restaurant, jingling the coins in his pockets, audibly sniffing the rich cooking odors. Still jingling coins, he varied the promenade by strolling into the kitchen and sniffing ever more noisily. When it became apparent that he had no intention of ordering dinner the proprietor was furious. "You've been hanging around here for hours," he exclaimed sarcastically. "I can't stand you jingling coins and sniffing like a dog! Either go away or come in and order." The stingy man stopped sniffing and looked the proprietor over coldly. "Why should I order? You've heard the sound of my money, I've smelt your food! We're quits!"

We had been in Peking a year when the first attack against Wellington's life was made. But I was the real victim. It was a peaceful, early summer evening in 1923, two months before my second son was born. We had dined quietly in the garden and just before retiring Wellington complained of feeling ill. Towards midnight he suffered violent pains in the stomach and vomiting. I nursed him as best I could, but soon I too became sick. At three in the morning I collapsed, the household was aroused, and the major-domo sent for doctors and nurses. The doctors used a stomach pump and gave me morphia to ease the agonizing pain. Before lapsing into unconsciousness, I asked if my husband was all right and, as the life within me seemed stilled, if I would lose my baby. I was desperately ill for days, and when at last I came to I was surprised to find I was still with child. Analyses proved that our food had been sprinkled

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with arsenic, and due to my condition, I had been more susceptible than Wellington.

Undoubtedly, one or more of the servants had been paid to poison my husband. Several of them disappeared during the excitement, and though the police made every effort, they were never caught. Fortunately, I was none the worse for the grim experience, and my son arrived punctually, a handsome, healthy baby.

We had barely recovered from our poisoning scare when a second attempt was made on Wellington's life. This time both my husband and I escaped injury, but the bomb wounded one of our servants, severed the hands of another, while a third was critically hurt.

It appeared to be a present, for the contents were plainly labelled as valuable white-gold seals of the ancient Ts'in Dynasty. The parcel had come from Chen Ch'ow where recent excavations had unearthed a wealth of *objets d'art*. Wellington's secretary, Mr. Yang, believing it either a gift or one of my husband's purchases, ordered it left in the office. The following day Wellington attended a cabinet luncheon while I motored to Tsing Hua College thirty miles outside Peking. On his return, my husband saw the package for the first time. He summoned a servant and after reprimanding him for allowing an unexamined parcel in the house, bid him throw it in the pond. The servant, however, read the label and thought he had a windfall. He called several of his confrères to help him open it and share his luck. One of them steadied the box while he pried off the lid. Without warning, the package exploded with such terrific force that the servant was flung fifteen yards away and the man holding the top, had both hands blown off.

I returned home to find my palace surrounded by soldiers and police, an ambulance outside the gate and a pall of inky

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smoke obscuring the courtyard. The major-domo rushed to meet me, babbling hysterically not to be frightened, only an electric fuse had blown out! I found my step-children huddled safely in the Blue reception room, my babies yowling miserably and Wellington far more shaken than he dared admit. Like the poisoning, our private bomb outrage remained very much a mystery. The Chinese who actually sent the bomb confessed when caught, but he was merely a young student, an innocent tool who delivered the package quite unaware of its deadly contents. On Wellington's recommendation he was soon released. Those who made the bomb or actually planned this act of terrorism, were never caught.

The Marquess and Marchioness of Willingdon came to China en route to his post as Governor General of Canada. Lord Willingdon, who had been Viceroy of India, was also a delegate to the Committee of the Boxer Indemnity Commission. They arrived with a large suite and their presence was the signal for a great round of entertaining. Lady Macleay and I did a thorough job of showing Lady Willingdon the sights. Lord Willingdon, who was prouder of his cricket record than his brilliant diplomatic career, took a tremendous interest in my small sons. When he discovered that the younger, who was scarcely two years old, had been given no foreign name, he asked if I would name the baby after him. I was delighted and flattered. So my tiny boy was called Freeman Fu-chang Koo.

Pao-pei, my favorite Pekinese who had travelled so much with me, settled down to motherhood in Peking. Gone were the sybaritic days when the Princess of Monaco kept a special roast grouse on the sideboard for her, when I had the delectable birds sent airmail from Harrod's to Paris to please

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my precious pet. But before Pao-peï took up serious family duties she had one last adventure. She vanished completely from the palace grounds. I was doubly determined to get her back, because I did not want my strain of Pekinese to become common property, and there was danger of that, as Pao-peï was in pup. I prayed at the Dog Temple and had almost given up hope of seeing my doggie again, when a maidservant timidly suggested my consulting a Yuan Kwang-ti.

A Yuan Kwang-ti is a fortune-teller whose special gift is retrieving lost property by the improbable method of inducing second sight in young children. There are many such seers in Peking, most of them old and blind. I thought myself far too sophisticated to believe in such preposterous goings-on. But I had heard much of their powers and was curious to see how their magic worked. I sent for the best known Yuan Kwang-ti in the city. He was gaunt, blind and very ancient, and as he was led slowly into the room his dignified bearing was impressive. He explained carefully in a sing-song voice that he could find lost objects only through children less than ten years old. After that age the bloom of innocence disappeared and they became useless as mediums.

The seance commenced. We crowded about him in a half-circle, my two sons, seven and eight, their American governess, a friend or two of mine and a score of fascinated servants. The Yuan Kwang-ti burnt preliminary joss sticks at a small altar placed in front of a sheet of white paper much like a cinema screen, which had been pinned to the wall. A young boy was called in from the street and told to gaze hard at the paper. He stared unblinkingly but could see nothing. A second child was brought in and he, too, saw only the blank paper. The servants grumbled rudely. Then

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the Yuan Kwang-ti invited Wellington Jr. to step forward and concentrate on the paper. He screwed up his eyes comically, but try as he might Wellington Jr. saw nothing. Freeman, who was sitting beside me, suddenly wriggled with excitement and piped in English, "Wellington, don't you see? There's the little dog!" He jumped up, stood beside his brother and both commenced a running commentary, as if they were describing a motion picture. "I see the little dog!" shouted Wellington. "She's under the bed and tied up with a string!" "There's a man there, too," continued Freeman. "He has long hair and a long black gown covered with a gray jacket." "Look, look again," encouraged the Yuan Kwang-ti, passing his hands swiftly across the paper. Evidently there was a flash back, the children jabbered on, there was an old man beside our gate, he was offering Pao-peï something to eat, he had snatched her and was getting into a ricksha.

The blind man broke the thread again, asking in what direction the ricksha had gone. My sons were too young to know and merely waved their hands towards a corner of the room. I was puzzled but one of the servants exclaimed, "It must be the northeast of Peking!" The fortune-teller persisted: did they see anything else? "Yes," they chorused, "an old man with a beard." "Ask the old man if the doggie will be returned," commanded the Yuan Kwang-ti. The boys were silent a moment. "He's nodding his head!" they shouted triumphantly.

The Yuan Kwang-ti's magic was unexplainable, but the boys' story was corroborated in every detail that same evening. My sons' description of the old man was given the police. A few hours later, in the northeast corner of the city, the old man was routed out, his house searched and the dog found.

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Neither Wellington Jr. nor Freeman suffered any bad effects from their dip into the occult; they thought it great fun and immediately afterwards gobbled down a hearty luncheon.

The Dog Temple, by the way, is the least pretentious and most charming temple in all Peking. It is a tumble-down place dedicated to the Dog God and kept in sketchy order by an old woman. In its dim interior owners of ailing dogs burn joss sticks and pray for their pets' recovery. If the prayers are answered the benign Dog God is given a present in gratitude. The gifts vary: toy dogs to keep the god company, fancy collars to tickle his vanity, blankets and miniature baskets to keep him cosy. The presents have accumulated through long years, perhaps centuries, and the temple is littered with toy dogs of every breed. My Pekinese were constantly suffering some mishap, I prayed often in the temple, thanking the Dog God with dozens of toy playmates and scores of tiny woolly blankets.

In Tien-tsin, our on-and-off political refuge, my Pekinese were treated with some of their old consideration by Premier Pan Fu. Pan Fu was an enchanting person, like someone in a story book. He was quite young, rich, handsome and the epitome of real Chinese worldliness. He never wore Western clothes, nor did he speak any foreign language. He had been Premier briefly in the cabinet of Chang Tso-lin, the Mukden war lord, and like most prominent Chinese in those uneasy days, maintained houses both in Peking and Tien-tsin. He was a born connoisseur of the exquisite, and collected jewelry, lovely concubines and exotic food. The jewelry, entirely Chinese in inspiration, was permanent, but except for his chief lady, I saw new faces whenever I visited Pan Fu. He loved entertaining and took the most extraordinary pains with his cuisine, searching out delicacies all

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over China and combining them with ingenuity and daring. Coming from Peking to Tien-tsin with my dogs, I always went directly from the train to lunch or dine with him. His greeting seldom varied. Smiling broadly, he would say, "The dinner for your precious ones has been ordered!" Then, turning to his major-domo, "It doesn't matter what you give Her Excellency to eat but be sure her little pets have the very best!" And, in grand style each Pekinese would be served his own bowl of delicate tidbits spiced with chicken and ducks' liver.

We had lived in Peking two years; life had been sweet, thoughtless, luxurious. I saw no reason for it to change. Then early one morning, after one of my countless happy evenings at the palace, dining and playing mah-jong with Madame Liu, President Tsao Kun's third wife, I woke early to what I thought was to be another uneventful day. Nothing more important was on my mind than a session of fittings with my tailor. My tall Manchu amah entered with the breakfast tray. Setting it down precisely, she announced in her flatly serene voice, "The tailor cannot come. No one is allowed to enter the house, the gates are guarded by strange soldiers and the telephone wires have been cut." I leapt out of bed and started dressing hurriedly. "Why didn't you wake me at once? Have you told His Excellency?" "No," the amah answered with irritating calmness, "it only happened ten minutes ago."

Wellington, usually so deliberate, left the house on the run. He was gone several nerve-racking hours. He returned, pale and haggard. "Keep calm," he admonished. "A coup d'état has taken place. General Feng, sent north by Wu Pei-Fu to fight the Manchurian war lord, has returned in the night and his army has secretly surrounded Peking.

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General Feng, now controls the city. The president is imprisoned in the palace and the cabinet is helpless." I asked him what we were to do. "This is very serious," he replied, "I can't yet tell what is going to happen." My husband is a man of few words, he loathes being questioned, hates to explain anything and expects me to read his mind. It was useless to bother him, I had to take events as they came. I began packing my personal belongings and ventured to ask if it was safe to leave the house. "Don't go out any more than necessary," he answered briefly.

I tried in vain to get in touch with Madame Wu Pei-fu. She had vanished in the night. No one, not even the cabinet members, could see the president. Tsao Kun was shut up in the palace, his fate in the balance. He might be shot at any minute or, as we hoped, sent to safety outside Peking. The diplomatic corps was in a turmoil. My friends in the various legations tried to contact me, to help all they could.

Within a day or two Madame Liu's mother made her way to my palace. Both she and her maid were disguised as peasants and came in a common ricksha. Gone were the poor old lady's rich black brocades, her shiny motor car, her bodyguards. Gone too were the water pipe and the pretty girl attendants. She cried continuously, begging me to help her. I promised to do my best. No one was allowed in the palace but I would try to find some way to reach Madame Liu. The old lady thanked me effusively and slipped away.

Although the Tsao Kun cabinet had resigned in a body, Wellington obtained permission for me to see Madame Liu. Accompanied by Madame Wang Ting-chang, wife of the chief of protocol, we drove to the palace in my car. It was a distinct shock when Feng Yu-hsiang's soldiers, who guarded the palace, not only failed to salute me but surlily demanded our pass. All palace formalities had disappeared. We were shown into Madame Liu's private apartments immediately.

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I did my best not to appear surprised or upset. Instead of the delicate, embroidered robes, the exquisite jewels and artful make-up, Madame Liu was dressed in plain black cotton garments and her face showed no trace of powder or rouge. Her eyes were swollen with crying, she seemed exhausted mentally and physically. Through the doorway I caught a glimpse of the president. Sitting immobile in an armchair, his chin sunk dejectedly on his chest, he was the picture of despair.

Madame Liu asked me in a whisper if I dared risk smuggling out her bankbook, a large roll of bills and a packet of jewels. I agreed but begged her to have her mother fetch them quickly since it was uncertain how long I myself would be safe. Madame Wang carried the jewels while I secreted the banknotes inside my clothing, trusting to luck that my added bulk would not look suspicious to the guards. Promptly, the same afternoon, Madame Liu's mother came to my palace and retrieved her daughter's fortune.

A few days later, Tsao Kun and his family were safe in Tien-tsin.

Wellington handed his seal of office to Dr. C. T. Wang, who had been a delegate to the Paris Peace Conference and later, in 1937, became Ambassador to the United States. Dr. Wang and General Huang Fu were the only men chosen by General Feng Yu-hsiang to be pillars of his cabinet. They divided most of the usual nine posts between them.

Once definitely out of office, Wellington went to Tien-tsin. It would have been folly for him to travel alone as the roads around Peking seethed with insurgent troops whose temper was decidedly explosive. A Canadian friend offered to drive my husband in his car. Tien-tsin was a hotbed of political refugees, and to avoid becoming entangled with them Wellington went to his brother's house in Shanghai.

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Recklessly, I stayed on in Peking, not in my palace but in the Peking Hotel, packed and ready to fly to Tsien-tsin at a moment's notice. This was my first taste of political black-out. Instead of being saluted, feared and fêted, I had to remain in semi-hiding, deprived spiritually, if not literally, of my liberty. It was an experience which did much to puncture my flourishing ego.

Soon I decided it was wiser to leave. Though Tien-tsin is only three hours from Peking, I looked upon it as unfriendly and disliked it intensely. A commercial river port, the city was filled with merchants of every imaginable nationality and thousands of Chinese political refugees. There were many foreign concessions, French, Italian, German, Japanese and British. When I arrived Wellington had returned from Shanghai and we settled down in a furnished apartment in the British Concession.

On leaving my Peking palace I went through an agony of separation more painful to me than the death of a loved one. I feared my palace might shelter strangers who would use it badly and I brooded bitterly over my lost home. The months dragged by and slowly the turmoil quieted in Peking.

We returned a year later, after too long an absence. My palace was in a state of partial ruin, many of my treasures had been lost or stolen. With loving care I put my house in order. Once more Peking became my world. I revelled in every hour of the day, sure that the rest of my life would continue in effortless serenity. But my husband, aware of political clouds gathering in the south, confided his forebodings to me "Our way of living cannot last much longer. Why should we, out of four hundred million people, be so favored by the gods and have wealth, glory and all we desire?" And I, not wishing my contentment shattered, would stop his gloomy words. I preferred living in a fool's paradise.

(23.)

Pei-ta-ho

In the summer of 1923, just two weeks after the birth of my second son, we went to Pei-ta-ho for the first time. Pei-ta-ho was a small village straggling along the shore and up the mountain which dipped abruptly into the Bay of Pei Chi-li. It was nine hours from Peking on the way north to Mukden, and its remoteness had first intrigued a group of missionaries. After the first World War Pei-ta-ho was "discovered" by the leading diplomats and foreigners of Peking, who raved about its rugged beauty and soon transformed the unpretentious village into a fashionable summer resort. The missionaries, having no taste for smart people, moved away and many of them reaped a handsome profit by

Pei-ta-ho

renting their bungalows for the short season. In the beginning, except for a half dozen wealthy Tien-tsin families who had been there since missionary days, there were few Chinese summer-colonists at Pei-ta-ho. The stellar attraction was Chang Hsueh-liang, the Young Marshal, heir to the vast realm and fabulous fortune of the Old Marshal, Chang Tso-lin, mighty war lord of Manchuria. The Young Marshal came south from his capital in Mukden because he liked foreigners and enjoyed playing both golf and tennis. He, in addition to the many prominent foreigners, proved an irresistible attraction to the Chinese, who love to follow the leader, and within a few seasons Peking's important citizens flocked to Pei-ta-ho *en masse*.

Life was simple at Pei-ta-ho and a great relaxation after the formal atmosphere of Peking. The sole hotel was second-rate and almost everyone lived in bungalows innocent of both electricity and running water. There were only three sizeable buildings in the resort, one was the British Summer Legation, the second housed the Chinese Customs, while the third, a gigantic red-brick nightmare, belonged to a sporty old Chinese. He was a shark at mah-jong and one evening, before commencing a sky's-the-limit game, boasted his intention of building a fine house with his winnings. The old gentleman was shot with luck, and at dawn when the thrilling contest ended he cashed in a sixty thousand dollar profit. Like a jack-in-the-box, his red-brick monstrosity popped up almost over night.

Neither automobiles nor carriages were allowed at Pei-ta-ho and local transportation was entirely by ricksha, bicycle or tiny donkey. It often took half a day to receive the answer to a note, as telephones were non-existent and the bungalows fanned out from the seaside high into the mountains. In spite of the distances everyone kept tabs on

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his neighbors, for all shopping had to be done at two tiny stores, and at *apéritif* time it was practically a ritual to gather at the Lotus Hill Restaurant. The Lotus Hill, a glorified cafe, was named after the charming little Buddhist temple next door. The temple was kept up impeccably and in mid-August was the scene of a gay harvest festival. The Pei-ta-ho authorities were really talented impressarios, and much to their delight the foreigners as well as the Chinese were asked to join in the *al fresco* celebration.

The first summer we were lent a bungalow some distance from the village. Later we bought a bungalow right in the center of things. The bathing beach was just beyond the garden; we had our own tennis courts and, most important of all, wells which assured us an adequate water supply. Wellington spent his vacations deep-sea fishing. Toting a luncheon basket and a complicated assortment of fishing tackle, he would disappear in the morning and seldom return until after dark. For many years he never went to a party nor made any effort to see his friends. They knew he was in Pei-ta-ho only because he sent them part of his catch.

I brought my saddle horse from Peking, and as soon as I felt well enough, set out to explore the countryside. The scenery was such a contrast to southern China. The mountains were austere and cold; instead of a landscape laced with rice fields sheeted in shimmering water, a vast sea of dusty brown kaoliang plants rippled towards the far horizon. Drab and unattractive kaoliang is a most accommodating plant and the staff of life of the northern peasant. Like a weed it shoots up twelve to fifteen feet, and at each stalktip, cluster brownish seeds which when dried are ground into a nourishing flour. The local peasant's daily dish is a pancake of kaoliang flour, rolled twice the size of a plate, stuffed with bean curd, then fried in peanut oil. The stalks are used

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for fuel, and, to keep their courage up during the long bitterly cold winters, the peasants swig vast quantities of *paikerr*, a potent brandy, almost ninety-five percent alcohol, which is distilled from kaoliang.

The summers at Pei-ta-ho were always a delight, but after 1927 when Mama, my sister and her son visited us, we did not return until 1930. But we made up for lost time in 1931; it was one of the most entertaining vacations I have ever had. Among the interesting foreigners who came to Pei-ta-ho was Countess Ciano, Mussolini's eldest daughter. Count Ciano was chargé d'affaires of the Italian Legation, and as at that time Italy had no minister accredited to China, he shouldered all diplomatic responsibility. He worked hard in Shanghai and took infinite pains to cultivate the leading Chinese personages. The count cut quite a swathe in the smart younger Chinese set and he pursued the Shanghai beauties with the most ardent Latin enthusiasm. But his many diplomatic chores, as well as his pleasures, kept him busy in Shanghai and Count Ciano seldom found time to journey to northern Pei-ta-ho.

Countess Ciano and her baby lived far up in the hills in a house which had been lent to her by Dr. Birt, Shanghai's famous surgeon. Though Edda Ciano was surrounded by her legation staff, she paid little attention to them and went everywhere with Miss Laura Chieri, who cheerfully doubled as friend and companion. Laura, who knew everyone worth knowing, had been born in China. Her Chinese friends were vastly diverted by her extensive vocabulary and remarkable ability to swear in their own tongue. The two young women were perfect foils for each other. Countess Ciano was exaggeratedly slim, had beautiful blue eyes and, because she had lost so much hair after the birth of her son, wore a severe Eton-cut coiffure. Laura was dark, blue eyed, and her serene

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madonna-like face belied the gaiety which made her such a belle in Shanghai. Edda Ciano was razor-sharp, her friend cheerful as a cricket.

Because the Italians lived so far away, they spent much of their time visiting in the more settled part of Pei-ta-ho. They loved to go swimming miles from town, not on a tame beach but off the rocks, quite naked in the delicious warm water. On these much-talked-of expeditions they would leave the donkey boys, guardians of their doughty steeds, far behind and go to no end of trouble to shake off the Italian bodyguards who trailed Mussolini's daughter wherever she went.

Our cottage was lovely in the evenings; it was always cool and from the porch we looked out on the calm summer sea. When we were not dancing to the phonograph, we organized a poker game or else played mah-jong which Edda, a born gambler, picked up like lightning. We three always spoke French together since in those days Countess Ciano's English was sketchy. I soon picked up a smattering of Italian, for in the excitement of a poker game both would lapse into staccato Italian. The poker games were very exciting. Edda unlike most foreigners played for high stakes. But her luck was atrocious.

Chang Hsueh-liang, the Young Marshal, was immediately attracted to Countess Ciano. But his usual leisurely vacation had been disturbed by politics and he had less time for social diversion. It was not until we had all returned to Peking that they struck up a close friendship.

Peking had changed a great deal since 1928, when Nanking became China's capitol. Even the name was changed from Peking to Peiping, and the city walls, once a glorious red,

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had been painted blue by the Kuomintang. Peking was now quiet and subdued, there was no more official Chinese life, and the wealthy Chinese had all moved away. But the majority of the diplomats' wives remained in Peking, while their husbands lived in their own consulates at Nanking or in hotels in Shanghai.

Edda Ciano and the Young Marshal saw each other every day, frequently meeting at my palace. Chang Hsueh-liang was so conspicuous and dashing a character that Edda feared her husband would put a stop to their friendship. She stood in awe of Count Ciano who was older and more sophisticated. Edda lacked the poise and self-confidence which the aristocratic Ciano came by naturally. But curiously, instead of making her snobbish, her unsureness made her try to put everyone else at ease.

The Young Marshal was enchanted when Edda nick-named him "Mon Béguin"—my crush. In the afternoons "Mon Béguin" and Mussolini's daughter took flights in his new Ford plane, an enormous ship piloted by a most engaging young American. Genial foreign hostesses often invited them to the same dinners, and occasionally their evening excursions set malicious tongues clacking wildly. They were seen on the broad city walls, Countess Ciano riding in a sedan chair, Chang walking alongside, and as it was unheard of for an important man to walk beside a chair, this created a sensation.

Edda, who did what she pleased, took a body blow from Peking's diplomatic wives. Shortly after her return from Pei-ta-ho Countess Ciano invited the entire diplomatic corps to an ambitious "at home." The party was the most dismal failure on record for not one of the diplomats' wives attended. The next day the doyenne of the *Corps Diplomatique* explained to me that her colleagues had not cut Countess Ciano

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out of snobbism or personal dislike, but merely because of protocol. Protocol, the yard-stick of diplomacy, decreed that a new member of the diplomatic corps should call on all the wives of diplomatic representatives before she could extend hospitality herself. Countess Ciano had never bothered to drop her pasteboards, and the ladies of the diplomatic corps, refusing to be impressed because she was Mussolini's daughter, took legal revenge for this breach of etiquette.

(24.)

War Lords

Twenty-two years ago, when Wellington and I married, our young republic was just stumbling into the second decade of its existence. Those were kaleidoscopic years. Administrations flickered briefly, corruption and civil strife prevailed. Over all the confusion rode the war lords, curious phenomena of a country changing from medieval to modern in too short a span of time. Through this turmoil my husband kept his equilibrium. Shrewd intuition enabled him to make far-sighted prophecies, to keep on the right road to the end. Even in the days when the war lords were all powerful, Wellington predicted their destruction. I disagreed. I was too close for impersonal perspectives. Seeing them in control of vast lands

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and in command of mighty armies, I had no vision beyond the present, and believed them a permanent part of the contemporary Chinese scene. To me they were men of importance, power and sometimes great charm.

Born of the revolution, the war lords reigned briefly, their authority was already on the wane by the late twenties. With few exceptions they lived riotously, amusing themselves with women and wine, traditional conqueror's fare. Ruthlessly they pursued their selfish ends, trampling and murdering those who hindered them. When their military power dissipated, one by one they melted away. Some were assassinated, others lived in retirement, a few sought solace in religion. No one who longed to see the day of a United China, regretted their passing.

Chang Tso-lin, who controlled Manchuria from 1918 to his death in 1928, was the greatest war lord of them all. Small and delicately formed, he was known as Ta Yuan Shuei, the "great commander-in-chief." Under Yuan Shi-kai, Chang became military governor of Mukden and at Yuan's death made himself master of all Manchuria. His was a purely military dictatorship, but once possessor of Peking, he was recognized as actual, if not legal head of the Northern Government.

Like most military autocrats, he was cruel to those who incurred his anger. Towards those he admired he displayed extreme courtesy. Important guests coming to his palace would be bowed out personally by him. A branch of an American bank was operated in Mukden exclusively to manage his private investments, although Chang Tso-lin kept much of his fortune in gold. Ruler of Manchuria for a generation, he lived like an emperor yet, paradoxically, hated extravagance, especially in women. His legal wife, the mother of his older sons, had died young. He never replaced her, but his Fifth Concubine was to all intents and purposes

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elevated to this rank. With every luxury at her command, she preferred a very frugal life, always dressed in cotton garments and personally supervised all the festival ceremonies.

The Old Marshal's daughter-in-law, wife of Chang Hsueh-liang, became an intimate of mine. Madame Chang Hsueh-liang was good-looking and soon learned to dress as I did. She was rich in her own right, but Chang Tso-lin strenuously objected to her spending so much money on clothes and jewels. Madame Chang never dared face her father-in-law in her finery. Once or twice, dressed in her best, she fled from the theatre when his sudden arrival was announced. I suspected that the Old Marshal disapproved of me intensely.

Chang Tso-lin adhered strictly to old-fashioned Chinese customs. He never invited women to his own entertainments, nor would he allow them at any private parties he attended. In public, he merely bowed to women, then ignored them. One evening during a benefit theatrical performance at which the diplomatic corps was present, Madame Chang and I sat together. I was introduced to General Sun Chuan-fang, former War Lord of the lower Yangtze's rich provinces, who was seated near by. Seeing I had no program, he rose and courteously handed me his. The Old Marshal was quite piqued at the general's politeness. "I never knew you to curry favor with ladies," he remarked tartly.

The Old Marshal loved gambling. In Chinese circles he won continuously by goading his opponents to exasperation. When he played dominoes for fantastic stakes he insisted that his son stand behind his chair to tally losses and winnings. There were few losses to count. In bad luck, he kept on doubling his stake until he won. When he played games with foreigners he was less domineering. Then he could not help losing. He was always nonplussed when others held

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better cards, and he went through a post mortem on every hand. "Just the wrong discard," Chang Tso-lin would say mournfully to the Belgian minister, his favorite opponent.

The Old Marshal left his palace only on important occasions. Usually he went to some foreign legation or, on rare occasions, to the Chinese theatre. Every precaution was taken to safeguard him. Chang Tso-lin rode in a massive armored motor preceded and followed by carloads of heavily armed bodyguards.

On the day he appointed himself dictator, Chang Tso-lin worshipped at the beautiful Temple of Confucius. For this solemn event he could not resist mustering all the imperial trappings. He prayed to Heaven and Earth to show him favor and bless his reign. Martial law was declared throughout the city. He went to the temple at night and everyone had to remain indoors. From palace to temple the streets were lined with a double row of soldiers who stood, shoulder to shoulder, facing each other. Yellow sand, perquisite of emperors, was strewn along the route.

The Old Marshal's death was in character with his violent life. The Japanese, who hated his firm, uncompromising attitude against them, assassinated Chang Tso-lin. A bomb was placed beneath a railroad bridge not far from Mukden and well within the Japanese-controlled zone. Though the Old Marshal took the precaution of riding in an ordinary coach coupled behind his conspicuous private car, it was in vain. His car was blown to bits, the War Lord of Manchuria and several of his aides were killed.

For days no one knew whether Chang Tso-lin was dead or alive. The public was told he was gravely wounded. His son, Chang Hsueh-liang, left Peking in disguise and circuitously made his way to Mukden. After many hardships he arrived to find his father in his coffin. Thirty-year-old

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Chang Hsueh-liang, the Young Marshal, heir to a lusty army and a fabulous fortune, became uncrowned king of Manchuria.

The Chinese still cling to their traditional fashion of conferring titles. The son of an admiral is a "young admiral," the son of a marshal is a "young marshal," regardless of military accomplishments. Chang Hsueh-liang, eldest son of the Old Marshal, is known as Hsiao Shuei, the "little commander-in-chief."

Chang Hsueh-liang exuded a devil-may-care magnetism. Tall, his eyes were unusually large, his nose high-bridged, his mouth sensual. He cut a dashing figure in his superbly fitted khaki or powder blue uniform. The Young Marshal was twenty-six when he first came to Peking. He had married at fifteen and at twenty was the father of three children. In Manchuria he had seldom met modern Chinese ladies and so in Peking he promptly became enamoured of the younger social set. These gay young people appealed to him because they were smart, fashionable and to him their modern Western ways were a fascinating novelty.

The Young Marshal's wife spoke no language except Mandarin, yet went out continually in the foreign colony. She was lovely looking and kindly. The diplomatic corps ladies were devoted to her, because she had the patience to play mah-jong with them slowly, and for small stakes. At formal entertainments Madame Chang Hsueh-liang would make an entry worthy of her position. Exquisitely dressed and bejewelled, she arrived with four lady attendants all in equally fine gowns.

After Chang Tso-lin's death, the Young Marshal and his wife lived in the Shen Chen Wang-fu palace. He ordered his

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subordinates to refurnish his palace like mine. They did their best and added an impressive dining room which seated sixty easily. But while Chang Hsueh-liang collected extravagant paintings and frescoes, he tolerated ugly modern carpets and an indifferent cuisine.

My first meeting with the Young Marshal was most dramatic, and in retrospect seems curiously unreal. He had arrived in Peking with his father, soon after the coup d'état. Wellington, as a member of the ousted regime, had gone to Shanghai, while I remained behind. I was in no personal danger, but I thought it wiser to leave my palace and move to the Peking Hotel.

I had not met the Old Marshal's son, Chang Hsueh-liang, but I did know Captain Wong, his aide-de-camp, a young graduate of West Point. Chang Hsueh-liang asked Captain Wong to arrange an introduction, but the young officer, too familiar with his commander's wild ways, tried to put him off. When the Young Marshal became insistent, the A.D.C. asked reluctantly if I would receive both Chang Hsueh-liang and his intimate, Chang Tsung-chang, the flamboyant war lord of Shantung. I declined this double honor, telling the correct West Pointer times were too uncertain to meet new people. Not daring to relay my reply to his chief, he hedged feebly until Chang Hsueh-liang, in exasperation, took matters into his own hands. With drawn revolver the irate Manchurian thundered into the Peking Hotel, threatened the servants guarding my suite and demanded to see me. Captain Wong, fresh from America, was horrified. "I beg you—you cannot do things like this!" he stuttered. "We are not in Mukden! Madame Koo is a highly civilized lady, she will not understand. Let me, I beg you, go in first and announce your visit. You are on her doorstep. I feel sure she will not refuse to see you!"

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I was confronted with a *fait accompli*. There was nothing to do except receive Chang Hsueh-liang and the Shantung war lord in the most courteous manner I could muster. I waited in my bedroom until the flustered aide-de-camp ushered his charges into the drawing-room, then my servant announced me.

My formality and politeness must have sobered my impromptu guests, for they behaved beautifully. We all had tea, and on leaving, the Young Marshal offered his own bodyguards as protection, should I wish to return to my palace. General Sutton, a one-armed Englishman and a favored member of his retinue, would be sent in the morning to look after me. If there was any further service he could render, I had merely to inform Captain Wong.

During his long stay in Mukden my husband came to know the Young Marshal well. They played a great deal of golf together. Wellington constantly warned him that his foreign policy was playing right into Japan's hands. Unfortunately for China, Chang Hsueh-liang took little heed and as usual went his own way.

The Young Marshal's intimate, whom I had encountered in so piquant a fashion, was the most fabulous war lord of all. General Chang Tsung-chang, ruler of Shantung, was six-feet-six and had fists like hams. He was tough, gay and genial until his terrible temper was aroused. He was nicknamed the "Three Don't Knows." The story goes that whenever he was asked how much money he had, how many concubines, or how many soldiers in his army, the curt reply was always the same. Actually, he had many soldiers and a fantastic fortune. With the aid of both, he controlled for a long time Shantung, one of the largest and most populous provinces in China.

The number and variety of his concubines was a source

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of awe in northern China. Once, a junior officer ran away with one of them. The eloping couple were caught and the officer brought before his general. "How dare you run away with one of my wives?" growled Chang. The young officer avowed humbly his readiness to accept any penalty the general might impose. Then the war lord burst into sudden laughter. "For such bravery," he shouted, "I'll promote you!"

When China began to be unified he was eased out of the military and political arena and retired to Peking. His vast property was near my palace, and I met him frequently. It was pathetic to see such a vigorous giant doing absolutely nothing. One day he decided to go abroad and asked Wellington to arrange a diplomatic passport. After making a farewell trip to Shantung, six-feet-six Chang Tsung-chang, an ample target, was murdered in the railroad station.

I was in Paris in 1936 when the Young Marshal and General Yang Hu-cheng kidnapped Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. Madame Chang Hsueh-liang was there also, with her youngest son, who was in the American Hospital, seriously ill. Wellington was in Geneva, so when I read the astonishing news in the paper I telephoned the Young Marshal's wife, who immediately rushed to my house. She was like a demented woman. During the two weeks the Generalissimo was held prisoner by her husband she scarcely slept or ate, and cried continuously. When the Generalissimo was released Madame Chang Hsueh-liang caught the first boat for China.

The "Christian General" Feng Yu-hsiang, was an engrossing personality. Starting his career as a simple soldier he forged ahead because of his tremendous will to work. He was sent to Peiyang, the famous military academy at Pao-

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ting-fu, where his genius for organization led to swift promotions under Yuan Shi-kai. It was not long before Feng Yu-hsiang became a leading general in his own right.

He was basically tough and ostentatiously simple. He wore plain uniforms and never ate more than one dish at each meal. "No work, no eat" was his pithy motto and he never let anyone forget it. But the "Christian General" practiced what he preached, working overtime to fit himself for military leadership. Early in life he was converted to Christianity by Methodist Missionaries and his second wife, whom I knew, had been a secretary in the Peking Young Women's Christian Association. Towards her he was equally Spartan and even forbade Madame Feng to wear silk dresses. Feng Yu-hsiang's army was as remarkable as its general. The soldiers were forbidden to smoke, drink or gamble, and started off each day with a lusty round of hymns. This was lean fare for soldiers, but they flourished and followed their commander with fanatic zeal.

Feng was a powerful man, well over six feet, heavy featured and with chunky shoulders bulging the seams of his uniform. He usually declined social invitations, but when I asked him to a dinner in honor of Mrs. Roosevelt, widow of President Theodore Roosevelt, he accepted. All our guests were elaborately dressed. The "Christian General" was the last to arrive. He had come straight from army headquarters and had not had time to prink. His cotton uniform, padded against the cold like a football player's, was spattered with mud and as he marched across my drawing room his ruggedness made the other guests seem effete.

Like the "Christian General," Wu Pei-fu, the scholarly war lord, also commanded a colorful army. One day, when we were visiting his headquarters, he invited us to watch the manoeuvres of his military guards. We lunched, men and

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women together, and afterwards stood on a balcony. Below in the courtyard were ranged at least a hundred soldiers, stripped to the waist, their trousers rolled to the knee, a primitive double-edged hatchet-like weapon strapped to their bare backs. At a signal they paired off and with their terrifying swords started feinting at each other. Swiftly the pace increased, the sun stabbed the blades in blinding flashes. The pairs squared into fours, then everyone seemed to be thrusting ferociously at each other. The sham battle ended, other swordsmen leapt forward, each twirling the weapon around his body, from one hand to another, until the whirling blades merged like the flanges of an electric fan. Smiling delightedly, Wu Pei-fu sidled among the fighters, criticizing, complimenting, more like a genial father than a commander-in-chief.

As a finale they rushed together at an imaginary enemy, hacking, cutting, shouting. Their yells were blood curdling, their battle cry "Sha!" meaning "Kill!" Though I did not realize it at the time, they executed their manoeuvres with dull-bladed weapons, otherwise half the battalion would have been chopped to pieces! Now, I hear, that in spite of modern weapons, these same troops still use this technique at close quarters and are the terror of the Japanese.

The governor and war lord of Heilungkiang, one of the Three Eastern Provinces, was General Wu, an amiable giant whose brawn tipped the scales at two hundred and fifty pounds. He seldom left his northern fastness, but on an infrequent trip to Peking he made a formal call on Wellington. After a cautious preamble he asked my husband's permission to pay his respects to me. He presumed, as I had been brought up in foreign style, that it was permissible to make the request. Not wishing to offend the general, my husband told him truthfully that I was out riding. At the time I owned a one-horse stable, a Russian hunter, Chinese

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horses being too small for side-saddle. The general, whose limited feminine acquaintance was most certainly old-fashioned, was so astounded at my athletic tastes that he begged to be allowed to give me a horse. Wellington declined tactfully and never even mentioned the incident to me.

General Wu was not one to be sidetracked. Returning home a few days later, I was amazed to find the street outside my palace packed solid with shaggy Manchurian ponies. They squealed, whinnied and kicked up a blinding dust. Our gatemens stood by helplessly, literally wringing their hands in dismay. No one knew how to cope with this curious situation. Finally, we managed to shoo all eighty ponies into the eastern courtyard, where they remained until I contrived their return to the general. Quite unruffled by the ponies' return, the war lord of Heilungkiang continued to shower us with equally astonishing presents. Colossal bear skins, shot in his frigid province; bear paws, to be stewed into delectable soup; jinseng, a precious aromatic herb, turned up in big baskets, and fish snouts, cut from the highly prized fish which breed in Manchuria's Sungari river, overwhelmed our chef. Sometimes General Wu's generosity was very hard to deal with for, according to Chinese etiquette, presents should be reciprocated. And it was not easy to find gifts of such extraordinary rarity!

One man is usually sufficient to haul a ricksha. Real swells, and the merely pretentious, employ one man to pull, another to push. But when our northern friend stuffed his bulk into a ricksha, it took four stout men to budge the vehicle. One summer at Pei-ta-ho, where motors were forbidden, the general paid us an unexpected visit. He left in a torrential cloudburst, and a few minutes later his men ran back to tell us the ricksha was bogged in mud. Wellington, donning raincoat and rubber boots, found the General

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being heaved from side to side as the men tried to pry the ricksha loose. General Wu, who was extremely polite, was much concerned when his host loomed in the rain. There was little Wellington could do, but courtesy demanded he stand in the downpour while the townspeople organized enough manpower to hoist both the General and his ricksha from the hole.

Poor General Wu! He was a fascinating character and did not deserve his tragic fate. He was blown up with Chang Tso-lin on his death ride to Mukden.

(25.)

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My first long stay in Shanghai was in 1926, after the coup d'état of Feng Yu-Shiang, the "Christian General," had forced us to leave Peking. We lived several months at a curious hotel, the Majestic. Originally it had been a private residence built by an eccentric Englishman to please his Chinese bride. The gigantic main hall was actually inlaid with pieces of real gold and there were acres of carefully laid out gardens. My baby sons played happily on the lawns, but I seldom allowed them out of my sight, as I had been warned of Shanghai kidnapers.

Though Shanghai is only a thousand miles from Peking, I found it another world. Young women in Peking were

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retiring, never mixed with foreigners and few spoke any European language. In Shanghai the nice girls had lost their shyness, they met foreigners on an equal footing, and though they were not completely at ease, racial barriers were definitely breaking down. Modern schooling was partly responsible for the change. Now girls were taught practical contemporary subjects; the difficult Chinese classics were almost ignored, while the study of poetry and the formal technique of Chinese painting had gone entirely out of fashion. The social give-and-take of upper class Chinese and foreigners grew more noticeable every day. The craze for night life swept Shanghai, and young Chinese society plunged dizzily into the jazz age. But despite the new freedom, Shanghai moral standards were still old-fashioned. Divorces were almost unknown and while the usual partiality towards males sanctioned as many marriages as a man wished, a woman once widowed or divorced dared not defy public opinion by re-marrying. And even the most innocent flirtations were carried on surreptitiously.

When I returned to Shanghai four years later, the tremendous influence of the west on the rising Chinese generation had westernized its social code to a startling degree. Divorces were accepted with true occidental casualness, and though there were few mixed marriages, Chinese girls did not hesitate to coquette with attractive occidentals, many of whom had recently learned Mandarin or Shanghai dialect. Boys and girls whose parents had met each other first on their wedding day stepped out to night clubs together and even entertained foreigners in their homes. But there was, and still is, a great hitch to this East-West get-together spirit; the Chinese have as much difficulty in discriminating between foreigners as foreigners have in distinguishing between Chinese.

I found Shanghai under an American spell. The streets

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were crowded with American cars; American refrigerators and radios were in almost every home; the big hotels had their American jazz bands. There were soda fountains galore, a chain of small eateries called "Jimmy's Kitchen," where the waitresses wore starched white uniforms, and the menus featured hot dogs and waffles. Many of the night clubs and restaurants were run by Chinese who had worked in the United States, and they, abetted by Hollywood, were largely responsible for the American vogue. Motion pictures made a deep impression on Chinese women. They aped the stars' clothes and mannerisms as best they could, while Hollywood's astonishing décor was responsible for a gruesome trend in interior decoration. Elizabeth Arden blossomed into a feminine deity; her permanent wave transformed half the sleek heads in town into a mass of riotous curls; her false eyelashes proved a sensation. For a brief delirious moment, all fashionable Chinese ladies had lashes fluttering up to their eyebrows. And many a Shanghai dinner party was brightened when a treacherous strip of eyelashes fell into the bird's nest soup!

I was impressed by the chic of Shanghai's modern young women. They had inaugurated a successful revolution against China's traditional costume, substituting long, slim gowns, becomingly moulded to the figure, for the cumbersome pleated skirt and bulky jacket. Though I had been wearing European clothes for years, the new gowns appealed to me. They were comfortable as well as smart and, requiring little material, were relatively inexpensive. I started a Chinese wardrobe and in the process accidentally made several adaptations which, because they were widely copied, set me up as a fashion leader. The new dresses reached to the ankle and were slit only a few inches up each side. Any impatient step tripped me so I ripped the original slits recklessly to the knee, then, abashed by the show of leg,

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designed lace pantalettes which were decorative yet concealing. I also found the gowns too austere for my taste, so I carried the fancy braid edging the slits up to the waist and sewed trimming from the under-arm opening to the upstanding collar. I altered the length of the sleeve to suit the occasion and revived an interest in Chinese silks by insisting all my gowns be made of local stuffs. This upset the Shanghai fashion plates, who thought anything foreign desirable and considered imported materials the ultimate chic.

These same ladies never missed one of my moves, imitating me with flattering frequency, though sometimes their anxiety to be stylish ended disastrously. I wore no stockings all through the coldest spells. For a while this foible puzzled the fashionables, but judging it smart, many followed suit, grimly risking colds and chilblains. Much to their consternation, I reappeared in stockings a few weeks later. No one asked the reason for my bare legs, and few ever knew I had suffered from a leg infection which had made stockings a torture!

I bobbed my hair soon afterwards. Frightened at my temerity, I waited for Wellington's shocked comments. He never said a word. I knew he disapproved, however, because he adapts himself slowly to new ideas.

I had lived so much abroad that my new Shanghai acquaintances imagined me the essence of everything modern and foreign. They were surprised to discover I preferred jade to diamonds, Chinese food to French cooking and old Chinese houses to their shiny modern homes. Glitter mattered most in Shanghai. Diamonds pretentiously set in platinum weighed down both smart and not so smart wrists and fingers. Imperial jade was appreciated only by the elder generation. So when I went about wearing jade bracelets and

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ornaments, my lack of sparkle actually made me conspicuous.

Chinese New Year is the gayest festival on the calendar. Everyone gives presents lavishly, and the rich vacation as long as they can. I found few old-fashioned customs in sophisticated Shanghai. Scarcely anyone bothered to wear the traditional red dress, or to clean their houses and put up fresh curtains. The bizarre dragon dances, once a featured part of the celebration, had disappeared entirely. But there was no end of rockets and firecrackers. Their explosions, which were guaranteed to scare off any lurking devils, kept everyone awake several nights in succession.

The less frivolous side of the New Year was still observed in Shanghai. Customarily Chinese pay their debts only three times a year; on the Dragon Boat Festival, the Harvest Moon Festival, and on New Year, the grand day of reckoning. Shopkeepers close their yearly accounts on New Year's Eve and throughout the country, rich and poor alike, struggle to settle their debts and collect what is due them. If a man cannot meet his obligations by New Year's Eve, he simply hides until morning when, since money transactions are forbidden on a holiday, he is technically safe until the next settlement day. Actually he is far from safe, since his creditors may still track him down, provided they carry a lantern. The lantern is polite camouflage to suggest the darkness of New Year's Eve, when debts are still legally collectable! It is difficult to imagine a more embarrassing predicament than being pursued in broad daylight by a creditor flourishing an unpaid bill in one hand and a lighted lantern in the other.

There were four million people in Shanghai, living in three distinct sections: Greater Shanghai, the French Con-

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cession, and the International Settlement. The Mayor of Shanghai administered Greater Shanghai, where many moderately well-to-do Chinese made their home. The French Concession, run expertly by French authority was the favorite residential quarter for both foreigners and wealthy Chinese. Shanghai's important business center was in the International Settlement which was managed independently of the others by a city council whose members included British, American, Japanese and Chinese. Each foreign section was separately policed. French Annamites and White Russians paced the French Concession, while the International Settlement's police force was a mixture of British, Chinese, Japanese and the ubiquitous Russians.

The great era of Shanghai prosperity lasted a delirious decade from the mid-Twenties to the Thirties. It was a period of vast expansion, accelerated when Peking was dethroned as the national capital. Shanghai, the fourth largest port in the world, became the vital center of China. Government officials gathered there, wealthy Chinese bought houses and most foreigners transferred their businesses there from the stagnant northern cities. Land had always been expensive, but soon prices sky-rocketed and fortunes were made literally over night. Real estate speculation became a mania, like gambling on the New York stock exchange, and for every smart person who made money, there were hundreds of suckers who faced ruin when the boom finally collapsed in 1934.

During these hectic boom years Shanghai night life blossomed extravagantly. It was smart to have a good time and even the most staid people made the midnight rounds with surprising frequency. Everyone had money to burn. Dinners of sixty to eighty were not unusual, and as restaurant entertaining was still a novelty, these unwieldy parties were

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always given at the Paramount, a giant dance hall, much like Les Ambassadeurs in Paris. The Paramount food was exquisite, its White Russian cabaret excellent, and the medley of Chinese and every imaginable variety of foreigner made it glamorously cosmopolitan.

I had half a dozen intimate friends who formed an inseparable band, going everywhere together after the more formal parties were over. Laura Chieri, now the Comtesse de Courseulles, renewed our Pei-ta-ho intimacy, and we enjoyed each other's companionship more than ever.

I found Shanghai gayer than London or Paris, and having no official responsibilities, frivelled away the time. Of the half-dozen fashionable supper clubs the most popular was *Ciro's*, owned by Sir Victor Sassoon. Most of the clubs were in the International Settlement, where an early closing hour was strictly enforced. When we wanted to "do the town," we simply stepped across the Avenue Haig to the Del Monte, a gaudy place but the only one open all night. The Avenue Haig was a curious street, one side was in the International Settlement, and the other technically in Greater Shanghai where no curfew laws existed.

The White Russian owners of the Del Monte were clever enough to sacrifice extraterritorial protection and scoop a juicy profit from the night-hawk patrons of their rivals across the street. Beside delicious sausages and coffee served at five in the morning, the great Del Monte attraction was its taxi-girls. They were slim, lovely and very young. Though anyone could buy three dances with them for a dollar, they expected a handsome tip. I was told that the more successful girls earned anywhere from four to five hundred American dollars a month. Most of the Del Monte girls were White Russian, while their most beautiful Chinese confrères ornamented the rival St. Anna dance hall.

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Shanghai offered a great variety of diversions. I never dared visit the gambling casinos, but I knew they were run on the most lavish scale. Foreigners were the best clients and apparently they enjoyed the risk of being raided. Everything was free: meals, liquor, smokes, even gay entertainment was on the house.

The White Russians were the backbone of Shanghai night life. They began to trickle into China after the Russian Revolution and arrived in increasing waves until they reached a flood tide after the Japanese occupation of Harbin. They were ambitious, industrious and had no false pride about earning a living. The men became bodyguards, policemen, chauffeurs, masseurs, hair-dressers, night club impressarios. Before long the Avenue Joffre, an important Shanghai thoroughfare, was lined with their attractive shops. The White Russian women were more conspicuous, because literally hundreds became dance-hall girls. You found them in every kind of amusement place from the lowly Hong Kew halls, patronized by sailors, to the glittering night clubs where evening dress was obligatory. They were decorative, gay, charming and added a sophisticated touch to Shanghai gaiety.

I came in contact with many interesting personalities in the vivid kaleidoscope of Shanghai life. One of the most distinguished was Tang Shao-yi, the father of my husband's late wife. A leader of the older-generation statesmen, Mr. Tang had served many years under the old dowager empress, and had been sent by her officially to thank the United States Government for cancelling part of the Boxer indemnity payments. He had remained some time in the United States, studying its judicial system. Returning to China he adapted himself remarkably well to the new Republican regime and took an active part in politics. He was a great connoisseur

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of porcelains and owned perhaps the most fabulous private collection in China. Madame Tang was a tiny, alert woman at least thirty years his junior. Both she and her husband grew very much attached to me and treated me almost as if I were their daughter. Their eldest child, Madame Chu, became a great friend of mine, and at one of her delightful parties I first met beautiful and refined Miss Soong Meiling, who is now Madame Chiang Kai-shek, China's first lady. Miss Soong was serious minded even in those care-free days and I remember that she made no move to join our silly group which laughed and joked throughout the evening. I was very much aware of her vibrant, beautifully modulated voice and her faultlessly proportioned feet.

Among the foreigners, the late Mrs. Cunningham, wife of E. S. Cunningham, the American consul general, was especially popular with the Chinese. She had incredibly long brown hair, which when unpinned cascaded below her knees. Once I asked her how she could bear the ordeal of a shampoo. "Why my hair has never been washed!" Mrs. Cunningham replied, enjoying my amazement. "It's merely cleaned with eau-de-cologne!"

In 1932, during the brief "Shanghai War" when the Chapei district was destroyed by Japanese shells, Mrs. Cunningham's great courage further endeared her to the Chinese. Many children abandoned by parents fleeing from the bombed area were in great peril from continued Japanese shelling. Mrs. Cunningham, realizing the danger, wheedled passes from both Japanese and Chinese, and driving her own car, made a house-to-house search of the devastated district. She rescued hundreds of children and brought them back to her consulate, where they were cared for until the panic-stricken fathers and mothers could be located.

Sir Victor Sassoon arrived from Europe the first few

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weeks I was in Shanghai. He is swarthy, slightly lame, and never without a monocle. Women are fascinated by Sir Victor, because his wit snaps like a whip and is often devastating. The Sassoons originated in Bagdad, widened their business scope to English banking circles, and eventually were knighted. Sir Victor, however, invested a high percentage of his fortune in the Orient. His more obvious holdings in China include Shanghai's very grand Cathay Hotel and several of the finest apartment houses in the French Concession. The first time I met Sir Victor, he presented me with two dozen pairs of the most delicate French silk stockings. I learnt later that this was his invariable routine with ladies.

In the early days of motion pictures Chinese audiences went wild over detective and gangster films; romance as such, trailed far behind. But as the fans grew more sophisticated their blood-thirsty taste dwindled, and glamour rode the crest of popularity. When finally China commenced the production of movies, Miss Butterfly, whose Chinese name was Hou-tier, or Butterfly Woo, was featured as the heroine of a hundred different love stories. As China's great star, her unique position kept Miss Woo constantly in the limelight, but unlike some Hollywood beauties, she remained sweet and unspoiled. Though she spoke perfect Mandarin and was highly educated, it was her lady-like ways which won Butterfly real social recognition. At the peak of her career she fell in love with young and handsome Mr. Eugene Peng. Their wedding was the largest on record in Shanghai. Afterwards the bride and groom were hosts at a colossal dinner, given at the Paramount. Leaders of both the social and cinema world were all there, and it was great fun. Highlights of the

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evening included the presentation of a song, somewhat unimaginatively titled "Butterfly Woo," which the Paramount's orchestra leader composed especially for the happy event, and the distressing announcement of the bride's intended retirement of private life. Butterfly and her husband were in Hong Kong in 1941 when the island city was captured by the Japanese. Cleverly they pretended to collaborate with the enemy, though planning an escape. Disguised as peasants and taking along half a dozen children as a blind, they passed the Japanese guards, pretending to be beggars. Butterfly's husband smuggled out all her jewels and some of her most valuable costumes by bundling them in a filthy cloth.

Mei Lan-fang, who once toured the United States in style, is one of the greatest of China's traditional female impersonators. He owned a delightful house in the Western Hills, but after Peking lost prestige he moved to Shanghai. He and his charming young wife entertained a great deal. Their guests were interesting foreigners and the younger Chinese. The older Chinese still consider theatrical people far from respectable and never met Mei Lan-fang socially. Though Mei Lan-fang achieved his artistic reputation in feminine roles—actresses are taboo in classical Chinese dramas—he is extremely masculine and his natural voice, octaves below the falsetto demanded by theatrical tradition, invariably surprised me. Always an artist, his specialty is painting delicate pictures on fans. His work commands high prices, all of which goes to charity. Mei Lan-fang is easily the most important person in the Chinese theatre, yet he never refuses a charity performance and several times has graciously appeared in benefits which I helped stage.

Dr. Sun Fo and his charming Hawaiian-born wife also became friends of mine. Dr. Sun is the son of the late Dr. Sun Yat-sen. He has distinguished himself in politics quite

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on his own merit, and has steadfastly refused to bask in the reflected glory of his famous father. He has worked tirelessly for a closer co-operation between China and Soviet Russia and his most recent official position is President of the Legislative Yuan, an important division of China's government. During the summer vacations at Tsingtao, a stylish summer resort not far from Shanghai, Dr. Sun, forgetting politics for the moment, was both friendly and gay. Madame Sun was too delicate to do much stepping out, so she gave delightful parties in her own house. Invitations to the Sun's evenings were at a premium, for Madame Sun engaged Hawaiian musicians, prepared Hawaiian dishes and loaded her guests with fragrant leis.

In the Nineteen Thirties, my friend General Wu Tieh-chen was Mayor of Greater Shanghai. General Wu, who was wonderfully progressive, made his job very glamorous. As part of Greater Shanghai's new expansion, General Wu was largely responsible for the erection of an impressive civic center called the Shih Cheng-fu, and an equally imposing stadium.

The Shih Cheng-fu was built in Peking style with curving roof and walls set with green and red porcelain tiles. Hundreds of northern workmen had been imported to do the job, and the completed structures were considered a great architectural triumph. The stadium seated eighty thousand people and was in constant use for sports contests and gymnastic exhibitions, which had become a craze with the younger generation. Everyone in Shanghai was inordinately proud of the expensive buildings, but today with ruthless precision the Japanese have pounded both the Shih Cheng-fu and the stadium until only an outer shell still stands.

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In Mayor Wu Tieh-chen's regime the Shih Cheng-fu was a lively place. He instituted interesting rounds of civic activities, and three or four times a year gave gigantic receptions at which all the elite of Shanghai, some two or three thousand strong, thronged into the spacious rooms. The arrival in Shanghai of a distinguished visitor was usually the signal for a luncheon or dinner staged in grand manner and on a tremendous scale. One of the most enjoyable entertainments was given in honor of John Nance Garner, then vice president of the United States. Mr. Garner had represented his government at the inauguration of Manuel Quezon as first president of the Philippine Commonwealth. After the inaugural festivities were over, Mr. Garner, accompanied by a handful of senators and their wives, junketed briskly through the Far-East. Shanghai was their first port-of-call, and the Americans were welcomed with excited fanfare. Mayor Wu Tieh-chen, showed them the sights and climaxed the tour with a magnificent luncheon at Shih Cheng-fu. All the Shanghai notables turned out for the occasion and Mr. Garner proved a sensational success. The following evening Mr. Garner returned the Mayor's hospitality with dinner at the Park Hotel, Shanghai's newest skyscraper. I was placed at the host's right and Madame Wu, the Mayor's wife, on his left. As an entering wedge in the conversation I remarked that Madame Wu should have had the seat of honor.

"Don't worry about such trifles," said the Vice President, patting my hand reassuringly, "The State Department fixed up this seating plan in Washington months ago so it must be correct!" Then he tugged a fat, shiny watch from his vest pocket, shook it once or twice to make sure it was ticking and held it up for me to admire.

"See this watch?" he chuckled, "it's the finest dollar watch in the world and I'm taking it to the Emperor of Japan as a

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present!" I must have looked astonished for Mr. Garner continued proudly "I want the Mikado and the whole Orient to see what a fine product you can buy for a dollar in the United States!" I had never seen a dollar watch and was simply thrilled. I asked Mr. Garner if he would sell it to me. "Not at all! Not at all!" he rumbled amiably, "I'll give it to you!" The idea of my having the Emperor of Japan's gift tickled him so much he offered to repair or even replace it if the watch were broken. The Emperor of Japan, incidentally, missed out on a fine present for my watch is still running and has never been repaired. The Vice President and I got along swimmingly. I have seldom drawn such a diverting dinner partner. As we ate our way slowly through the numerous courses, Mr. Garner confided he had been a delicate young man, forbidden either to drink or smoke. He paused to laugh reminiscently, "But nothing in Heaven or earth could make me obey doctor's orders and there's never been a day when I haven't smoked or had a drink!"

The first mass marriages were celebrated at the Shih Cheng-fu in 1934. Mayor Wu Tieh-chen staged the ceremony impressively, with most of Shanghai's important personages as witnesses. Mass marriages were originated as an encouragement to young people who wanted to marry, yet could not afford the expense of a formal Chinese wedding. It was an economy move, yet because romance and economy do not jell, the Shanghai officials cleverly sugar-coated the idea with adroit publicity and made the ceremonies exciting as well as novel. Some sixty couples were married simultaneously at a cost of a few American dollars per couple.

Every detail was thoughtfully arranged. When they arrived at the Shih Cheng-fu each bride and groom was shown to an individual dressing room where, if they chose, they

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could change into bridal finery. The men wore the usual long Chinese gown with its short black jacket, and the bride, who no longer had to invest in the expensive old-fashioned Chinese robe, dressed in white satin. Wedding gowns could be bought for around fifteen American dollars in almost any store. They were made in the new streamlined Chinese style, but Western influence had penetrated so deeply into the Chinese social consciousness that the brides all added white tulle veils and carried bridal bouquets.

At the first mass marriage the Mayor's guests plus hundreds of friends and relatives of the young couples gathered in the large reception room at the Shih Cheng-fu. Suddenly an orchestra struck up the wedding march and the great outer doors were flung open. There, arm in arm, forming a long procession, stood sixty brides and grooms. They filed into the room, separating at the threshold, and the brides walked down one aisle, the bridegrooms down another. They moved slowly to the platform where, under the flag-draped photograph of Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the Mayor and his assistants were waiting. The brides and grooms bowed three times before the picture then, two couples together, ascended the platform. The marriage contract was read by the Mayor's assistant, and when the brief ceremony ended the new husband and wife bowed to each other three times. The Mayor handed them marriage certificates, and they were succeeded immediately by the next pair of couples. When the final marriage ceremony ended, they marched off *en masse* to be photographed.

The sporting events held in the stadium proved as great an attraction as the mass marriages. I went often to track meets and football games and could not help being impressed by the tremendous physical improvement in the younger generation. One of the most amazing things from the Chinese

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point of view were the swimming meets in which girls and young women competed. These Chinese mermaids wore one-piece bathing suits, and the older people were horrified at such scandalous goings on. Mayor Wu Tieh-chen made important occasions of these new-fangled sporting events and had no trouble persuading many of the cabinet ministers to fly down from Nanking to shed their lustre on the scene.

In 1934, when the real estate boom had begun to subside, Shanghai's gaudy era ended. The same spring Generalissimo and Madame Chiang Kai-shek inaugurated the New Life Movement. The Movement was started primarily to stimulate national pride, to end ancient Chinese social abuses which retarded the modernization of the nation and to counteract frivolous Western influences, while retaining those useful in building up the new China. It made an immediate appeal to patriotic Chinese and especially to the young students.

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Mukden Incident

On September 18th, 1931, shortly after our return to Peking from Pei-ta-ho, the Mukden Incident occurred. A short length of track along the Japanese controlled South Manchuria railroad was destroyed. The Japanese insisted that Chinese soldiers had blown up the rails but could produce no adequate proof to substantiate their claims. Later, it was ascertained, the incident was manufactured by their own militarists as an alibi for seizing Mukden, the capital of the Manchurian provinces. The Japanese were perfectly prepared; before dawn troops were rushed in from nearby Korea and that same evening Mukden had been captured.

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Within four days Japan controlled most of South Manchuria. So began the undeclared war.

Immediately after the Mukden Incident the National Government invited Wellington to Nanking for consultation. A dangerous international situation prevailed and they asked the Young Marshal to use his good offices in persuading Wellington to go. My husband, realizing the gravity of the situation, promptly flew to Nanking in a plane put at his disposal by Chang Hsueh-liang. Two months later, Wellington was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Early in December the League of Nations selected a commission of inquiry which was to journey to China and make an impartial, detailed report on the Manchurian problem. Lord Lytton headed this group of skilled observers which became known as the Lytton Commission. A few weeks afterwards the members' names were published and Wellington was designated Chinese assessor to the Commission.

They were scheduled to arrive in Shanghai in March. A wave of relief, followed by popular rejoicing, swept over the country. The commissioners were awaited as impatiently as rain after a searing drought. Everyone, peasants, coolies, shopkeepers, even the autocratic northern military commanders, shared an almost mystical faith in the power of the League of Nations. They were firmly convinced that the mere appointment of the commission presaged the return of the Three Eastern Provinces, and that once the Commission completed the Manchurian tour, the Japanese would be swiftly ejected and the vast territory returned completely to Chinese control. Huge sums of money were contributed, and all the cities through which the Commission was to pass were extravagantly decorated with pailous, triumphant arches decked with paper flowers. The enthusiasm was so contagious I was quite carried away by it, though in my

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inner consciousness I was dubious that any practical result would be achieved. I knew it was folly to imagine the Japanese would give up Manchuria just because the League of Nations sent out a commission of inquiry. But I did get a great thrill when I saw the first of many pailous placarded with "Long Live Wellington Koo!"

My husband's task was to accompany the Commission through Manchuria and present the Chinese case as favorably and accurately as possible. He would have to work under great difficulties, as Manchuria was in enemy hands and the wily Japanese would do their best to circumvent him whenever possible. Wellington and his assistants would have to supply every imaginable kind of statistics at a moment's notice and would be expected to have exact historical, political and economic information at their fingertips.

Wellington and I arrived in Shanghai before the commissioners. A reception committee, headed by my brother-in-law, Dr. U. Y. Yen, had been organized to see the Commission and its huge working staff comfortably housed, its mountain of luggage taken care of. It was an exhausting job. The members of the Commission were guests of China, and it was our duty to make their stay as pleasant as possible.

I soon met the members of the Commission. The Earl of Lytton was austere, aesthetic, yet he possessed great charm and the most polished old-world courtesy. Nothing seemed to ruffle his neat composure. An enthusiast for mountain climbing, he scaled several high peaks in the Tai Shian Mountains on his tour of inspection. His long legs carried him swiftly over the rough terrain and at the end of a strenuous climb he was reported to have been as cool as the proverbial cucumber. He travelled without a valet, painstakingly packing and unpacking his own valises, and always

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emerging immaculate as a fashion plate. General Henri Claudel was a typical French militarist. Cautious, reserved, he was not easy to work with, as he nearly always disagreed with his colleagues. The other members, Count Aldrovandi, Dr. Schnee and General McCoy, got on well with everyone. Count Aldrovandi had been the Italian ambassador in Berlin. He was dark, youngish, and though he suffered a great deal from gout, he struggled on uncomplainingly through the arduous trip. Dr. Albert Schnee was short and bustling. An expert on ancient history and colonial administrations, he proved an entertaining conversationalist. Tall, soldierly General Frank Ross McCoy's presence on the Commission was most welcome to the Chinese. The United States was not a member of the League of Nations, but because of its interest in China and approval of the League's approach to a settlement of the Manchurian problem, General McCoy was assigned as a representative. Mr. Yoshida, a jovial little Japanese with a smile permanently waved across his face, was the Nipponese assessor. He joined in the entertainments gaily, and much to the annoyance of the Chinese, was not the least embarrassed by his awkward role.

On the Commission's staff were Monsieur Robert Haas, the secretary-general, and his English wife; also Billy Astor, Lord Lytton's private secretary, who during his undergraduate days had made a trip to Manchuria and became a friend of Chang Hsueh-liang. With my husband went two old friends, Mr. Harry Hussey and Mr. William H. Donald, who acted as counsellors.

The Commission stayed in Shanghai for two weeks, and during that time my husband took them on a trip through devastated Chapei, a section of the city under Chinese administration which had been destroyed by the Japanese in the recent "Forty Days' War." At that time Chapei

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was still under martial law, for hostilities had ceased only ten days before the arrival of the Commission. The war had started in January, as the outcome of a quarrel between Chinese and Japanese over the death of a Japanese Buddhist priest. Attacks and counter-attacks followed, the Japanese sent troops, destroyers and airplanes to Chapei, while the Chinese put up a strong defense with the hard-fighting Nineteenth Route Army. Chapei soon became a shambles, and most of its buildings were burnt to the ground. The French Concession and the International Settlement were untouched, but refugees poured in from the bombarded areas and Shanghai trade came to a virtual standstill. Though actual fighting had ceased in March, it was early May before a definite truce was signed, and while the Shanghai fighting had focused public attention throughout the world, the Japanese quietly consolidated their position in the north. Harbin was taken, and all Manchuria fell under their control. By the time the Lytton Commission was ready to start on its tour of inspection, its members faced a far more complex problem than they had reckoned on when they left placid Geneva.

I was the only woman to travel with the Commission on the special boat chartered to take them from Shanghai to Nanking. Several cameramen from Fox Movietone, who were to record the Commission's activities, were on board and invited me to speak for the newsreels. I was secretly delighted, and in order to ensure a scintillating cinema debut wheedled Mr. Donald, one of Wellington's counsellors, into giving up a restful afternoon in writing me a speech. The Commission drove directly to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek's headquarters in Nanking, but I went to the Ministry of Railroads where I had been assigned rooms. A small gale was blowing that afternoon when the cameraman "shot" me

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in the garden. The finished pictures confirmed my worst apprehensions: I looked windswept and unsmart, my voice was entirely unrecognizable.

The Commission was scheduled to arrive in Peking in less than two weeks, and it was decided that they were to be entertained at my palace. Except for the few rooms I had been living in, the place was in a pitiful state of disrepair. The large reception halls and the dining rooms had been totally wrecked during the years political necessity had forced us to stay away. The prospect of renovating them was appalling, especially since now everything had to be put in order in lightning time. I brought back my furniture, porcelains, pictures and objets d'art from the Tien-tsin house, and personally supervising the contractors, coaxed them into working eighteen hours a day. In exactly eleven days everything was in readiness. More dead than alive, I had to rub my eyes. Magically, for the third time my fairy palace had come to life.

Peking was smothered with flags in honor of the Lytton Commission. The entire population seemed to be massed along the main avenues. The schools were closed, and the children, trotted out in squads, were given flags and told to wave them energetically. The Young Marshal and his staff, nattily uniformed and gleaming with decorations, lined up on the station platform and escorted the Commission in a long procession which wound under festive pailous to the Wai Chiao-pu for a mammoth reception. The Young Marshal and his wife entertained with great pomp in their beautiful Peking palace, but though the festivities were magnificent, the Chinese had no heart to enjoy them. Too much was at stake and Wellington keenly felt the responsibility of his position. He knew that all of China believed that the fate of Manchuria balanced in his hands, and that on his ability to handle a difficult

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situation depended the tenor of the Commission's report to the all-powerful League of Nations.

At the first official luncheon which we gave for the members of the Commission and a dozen or more of their assistants, Lord Lytton showed the most flattering appreciation of my palace, admiring especially the wonderful horn lanterns from Jehol. We invited General Wu Pei-fu and Madame Wu to the luncheon, as we knew that Lord Lytton would be interested in our scholarly word lord and find him most congenial. General Wu had retired from political life and was living quietly not far from us in Peking. He seldom ventured into the world and spent much time engrossed in religious contemplation, never being without a chaplet of prayer beads. He had aged a great deal in the few years since I had last seen him, and had shrunk into a little old man who was, we sensed immediately, out of touch with the contemporary situation. But he still looked most distinguished in his navy blue long gown, his black silk ceremonial jacket and his small black Chinese hat. General Wu spent the better part of the afternoon talking with Lord Lytton and the other delegates, and as he spoke no English, Wellington had a busy time translating. The old war lord took the greatest interest in the Commission and assured Lord Lytton of his great faith in China's destiny and my husband's ability to present our case.

As the Lytton Commission made its final preparations to enter Manchuria and buckle down to work, the Japanese were doing everything in their power to keep Wellington, as Chinese assessor, away from their newly acquired domain. They circulated the information that they could not be held responsible for his personal safety once he reached Manchurian territory. With typical Japanese evasiveness, they took the pains to warn the Italian ambassador in Japan to

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warn Count Aldrovandi, who in turn warned me of my husband's peril. Wellington, however, ignored the Japanese threats.

The Japanese placed every conceivable obstacle in his path, and Wellington learned in advance that only a few assistants would be allowed to accompany him beyond Mukden. I felt more confident when I heard that Mr. Donald and my husband's most trusted bodyguard were to make the entire trip. The bodyguard was a faithful soul who had been assigned to us by the Peking Government after our own private bombing outrage back in 1923. I entrusted him with a suit of clothes made of ordinary cloth such as peasants wear, and told him to place them next to his master's bed every night. If Wellington was trapped he could disguise himself as a peasant and have at least some small chance of escape. I warned the bodyguard never to leave Wellington's side and never to permit anyone to approach him without proper credentials. I knew that the Chinese in Manchuria would swarm around Wellington to voice their complaints and ask favors, and that it would be a simple matter for an assassin to hide in one of these crowds. As a final precaution I ordered a bullet-proof vest from Shanghai, and Wellington reluctantly promised to wear it. Afterwards he told me he never even had time to unpack his armor. I was nervous and frightened during the busy days before the Lytton Commission left Peking. Whenever I was free I stole away to a fortune-teller or to the oracle in one of the temples of Kwang-yin, the Goddess of Mercy. One after the other, I consulted the most famous blind seers in Peking and the oracles in half a dozen temples. They all reassured me in almost identical words: my husband would suffer discomfort and worry but he would return safely after

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gaining great honor. I grasped these comforting words eagerly.

The Lytton Commission finally left for Manchuria. It was an historic occasion, for it was the first time in the Far East that an international commission was to visit the actual area of dispute between two powerful nations. It was the first time that evidence was to be gathered by skilled observers, that common people and high officials were to be interviewed and the whole mass of facts impartially summed up so that the world might judge the merits of the case.

I seldom heard from Wellington during the weeks the Commission spent in Manchuria, for the Japanese tapped most communications to Peking. Occasionally, by some mysterious means, he managed to get a free wire, and so we were assured of his safety. On the return of the Commission I went to meet it at the Great Wall. I travelled in a superb, special train which the Chinese government had put at the Commission's disposal. It ran on its own schedule in a carefree manner, and was stocked with magnificent food and wines. The delegates, the assessors and the secretary general each had their private car, and there was a varied assortment of dining and drawing-room cars. Through the remainder of the summer, while the report was in the process of preparation, the delegates, whenever they had a mind to, whizzed to and fro in their train de luxe from broiling hot Peking to cool Pei-ta-ho. The Manchurian trip had been a tiring experience for everyone, but it had its humorous compensations and the Japanese spies proved unusually diverting. They were sprinkled thick as ants over the countryside, and with typical Nipponese lack of subtlety made no pretence of disguising their profession. They trailed the delegates doggedly, and while they were seldom objectionable, they were maddeningly underfoot. Part of their curious job

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was to haunt hotel lobbies and wait patiently until the Commission and its entourage were tucked safely into bed. The younger assistants, who kept a tardy curfew hour, felt sorry for the little Japs drooping sleepily in the draughty lobby and relayed them pot after pot of coffee to keep them awake.

One day Madame Robert Haas, wife of the secretary general, returned unexpectedly to her hotel bedroom and found a Japanese rummaging through her bureau drawers. She asked him sharply what he was doing, and he replied with considerable poise, "I'm just tidying up your room, Madame!" Knowing her impromptu caller was no servant, Madame Haas said cheerily, "Oh, in that case you might as well clean up the whole room, the floor hasn't been scrubbed in ages!" So she settled down in a comfortable chair and refused to release her victim until everything in the room had been thoroughly scoured.

While my husband was still busily engaged in the preparation of his report, France, through its minister, Monsieur Henri Wilden, asked him to report to Paris as soon as possible. Wellington would have preferred to stay in China, where there was so much work to be done, but when our government urged him to assume the dual role of Minister to France and Delegate to the League of Nations, he felt compelled to accept. In former years he had gained brilliant successes for China at the League, and with the Lytton report completed, it was important to have the Manchurian issue well handled in Geneva. When Lord Lytton left Peking Wellington accompanied him to Shanghai, where it was decided that he must leave at once for Europe. So he sailed on the same boat with the Lytton delegates, taking with him a fair-

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sized staff, and his old friend Mr. Hussey who had been of such help to him in Manchuria.

I was not at all elated at the prospect of going to France. It meant leaving my lovely palace again, giving up my wonderful life in Peking and taking my sons away from their Chinese studies just as they were making such swift progress. I followed Wellington to Paris several weeks later, sailing on an Italian boat. The Cianos came to bid me bon voyage, and Count Ciano was kind enough to serve champagne to the crowd of friends and acquaintances who came to see me off. It was all very noisy and confused. I cried as my sister left the boat, and I remembered Countess Ciano telling me to stop, because rivulets of mascara were running down my cheeks.

I was in Geneva almost continuously when the Lytton Report was under discussion by a committee chosen to draw up proposals to settle the dispute. The long drawn out debates lasted several months, and during this time Wellington presented the Chinese case to the best of his ability. Though neither the report nor the recommendations proved satisfactory to us or the Japanese, the sympathy of the Assembly, and for that matter, the entire world, was extended to China. The Chinese won victory after victory in the committee parleys and obviously bested the Japanese. Late in March 1933, the debate came to a head. A decision was imminent. Soon after the session opened Mr. Matsuoka, anticipating an unfavorable verdict, delivered a violent protest and without more ado led the Japanese delegation from the League of Nations Assembly hall. I was sitting in the gallery, as the Japanese filed out slowly. Their departure so delighted me that I applauded wildly.

PART FIVE

Ambadress

(27.)

French Accent

I arrived in Europe a few weeks after the Lytton Commission. It seemed strange to be back in Paris as wife of the Chinese minister, when only a few years before I had lived there in a private capacity. Then I would have been enchanted with my new position, but now I was so disconsolate at leaving my lovely Peking palace that I could not take my job as Ministress very much to heart. I moved into the same gay little house which I had bought from Rosie Dolly during my exile.

As Ministress, I had soon lost interest in the Chinese Legation, because it was impossible to improve the shabby, run-down building. I paid official calls on my various col-

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leagues in the diplomatic corps, and that was all. The spring of 1933 was enlivened by the Economic Conference in London. Dr. T. V. Soong, Chinese Minister of Finance and brother of Madame Chiang Kai-shek, headed the delegation, whose members included W. W. Yen, later first Chinese Ambassador to Soviet Russia, Dr. Quo Tai-chi, the Chinese envoy in London, and my husband. The delegates, their wives and assistants, flitted to and fro across the Channel like grasshoppers, while I remained in Paris to entertain them. I hopped across once to a very grand party given by Lady Astor for all the delegates.

After the Economic Conference delegation returned to China, life became humdrum again. At times I felt an almost unbearable nostalgia for the East, and when I became too restless I bundled my sons into an automobile and drove to Holland. There were several restaurants in The Hague where superb *rysttafel* was served and we would gorge shamelessly. Rysttafel, the Dutch amplification of a native Javanese rice feast, is singularly satisfying to me, as it includes all the delicacies which have enslaved my palate. The best rysttafel is composed of a minimum of fifty separate dishes containing condiments, curries, fried fish, fried fruits, croquettes, pastries, pancakes, sausages, eggs, skewers of meat, cucumbers, chutneys, chopped onions, grated cocoanut, peanuts, pickles, savoury, and odds and ends accompanied by plate-sized biscuits called *kroepeok*, made of rice flour flavored with prawns.

The complicated ritual of serving and eating rysttafel is only carried out correctly in Java and Holland. The dishes are carried to the table by a long procession of "boys," the head boy carrying a bowl of rice, the foundation of the whole feast. The rice bowl is set down, the smaller dishes

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circle it, each one in its proper place, the dry food in one section, liquids in another, and greasy bits in a third.

After several days of gorging we three exhausted gourmets would return to Paris, our appetites temporarily sated.

Sometime later the principal Chinese legations in Europe were raised to embassies, but France, in the throes of financial difficulties, did not immediately follow suit. Our ambassadorial standing was confirmed late in 1936, while I was in Shanghai, and I readied our new embassy the following spring for the reception of Dr. H. H. Kung, Chinese Minister of Finance and brother-in-law of Madame Chiang Kai-shek.

Dr. Kung made the long journey to Europe primarily to represent China as special ambassador at the coronation of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. I left China on the same boat as Dr. Kung and his entourage. His daughter, Rosamund, his son, Louis, and at least thirty assistants and secretaries made up the party. At sailing time the pier was packed solid, and thousands more, held beyond the gates, were there to see the Dr. H. H. Kung off. Madame Kung, her two younger children and her sister, Madame Chiang Kai-shek, came aboard with him for a final farewell. Watching from the deck, I wondered how they would ever get back through the crowds which surged at the foot of the gangway. But after all ordinary visitors had gone ashore, the marine band struck up the national anthem, and a special gang-plank was raised. Supported by their bodyguards, the two famous sisters went down the steep incline and through a cleared passageway.

The steamship company, as a courteous gesture to Dr. Kung, had installed a Chinese chef on board. My delight in having delicious Chinese food served on the high seas was

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exceeded only by the pleasure I had in the Kungs and their party. At each port of call Dr. Kung was greeted by enthusiastic crowds and whisked away to address some tremendous luncheon or dinner. I heard him many times, the timbre of his voice was beautiful and he had a great flair for saying just the right thing.

We wallowed through the Indian Ocean to steaming Bombay. Several of us, including Rosamund and Louis Kung, lunched on curries at the palatial Taj Mahal Hotel. (Louis Kung, incidentally, is now a captain in the Scots Guards, a unique distinction for a young Chinese.) Afterwards we went to a string of jewelry shops and eventually I persuaded them to visit a fortune-teller. The address was given me by a top-lofty, much turbaned jewelry clerk. To our dismay the fortune-teller lived in a filthy tenement. The walls of his single dingy room were covered with mystic charts. In spite of this hocus-pocus I sensed immediately that he was a fake. But some of our party having come so far, refused to budge until their fortunes were told. While the old man mumbled away I peeked into the surrounding rooms. Each one was dirtier than the last, each one was crowded with half-naked people. It was early afternoon, but the men, both young and old, were sound asleep. The women, more alert, sat chatting in various stages of undress and did not in the least object to my intrusion. They were all fat and their long black hair was greasy with oil. Several families shared a dark smelly hole which passed as a kitchen. The man cook, who wore only a red loin-cloth, was busy pounding vegetables on the unsavory floor.

It was a relief to breathe even the muggy Bombay air. On our way to the ship we passed the Parsee burial ground. The Parsees, a strange religious sect, carry their dead to the summit of a high hill. There the corpses are left exposed

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to the mercies of the elements and the vultures. None except burial parties are permitted to climb the hill, so we stood at the bottom watching vultures and other carrion birds circle and swoop in thick clouds. I was curious to see India's pathetic "untouchables," and asked the taxi driver to point one out. To my surprise, an "untouchable" seemed no different than any other Indian. But the driver assured me grimly they looked entirely different to a Hindu.

By the time we landed in Genoa I felt that I knew Dr. Kung quite well. He looks precisely what a minister of China and a seventy-fifth generation descendant of Confucius should look like. He is dignified without being severe, his face is always kind. He is charming to meet, and his old-fashioned Chinese manners are rare in this age of brusque, over-busy statesmen. Dr. Kung has a courtly habit of always giving presents to those whose hospitality he accepts. In France he sent carved ivory figures to Madame Blum, rock-crystal flowers to Ambassador Bullitt's daughter, Anne; to me, a pair of enamelled flower pots with jade and carnelian flowers. Yet gracious ways and great responsibilities do not prevent a lively interest in everything he sees. He never misses the smallest detail—and is not averse to criticizing frankly. Once in my Paris embassy a guest leaned his head against the back of a beautiful embroidered chair. Dr. Kung said to him sharply, "You have pomade on your hair and it will soil the chair!" Another time, Dr. Kung, making an inspection tour through the new embassy, mixed praise with a little scolding. "This is a real embassy. This is the first time China has been so well represented abroad!" Then, peering into a fireplace and finding it dusty, he turned to me with a twinkle in his eye and said, "With all your carefulness, you've never looked into the fireplace!"

Dr. Kung crammed a tremendous amount of action into

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his stay abroad. He made flying trips to Italy and Germany, later travelling to the United States. After the Coronation he remained a few weeks in Paris. In his honor we gave a round of luncheons and dinners which were climaxed by an "at home" to which the literary and social as well as the official Paris worlds were invited. Nearly thirteen hundred guests arrived. We stood in a row, myself, Dr. Kung, my husband, and the Chinese Minister of the Navy, from five until well after seven-thirty. Coming and going we each shook hands twenty-six hundred times.

After Dr. Kung left I was punch-drunk from entertaining, as I had given thirty luncheons and dinners, one right after the other, to my colleagues in the diplomatic corps. The only break in the series was a reception for Bishop Paul Yu-pin, the Roman Catholic vicar apostolic of Nanking. Bishop Yu-pin, who stands six feet four inches, started life as a buffalo boy in distant Heilungkiang province. At one time during his meteoric career he was a professor of philosophy and Chinese literature at the Pontifical College for the Propagation of the Faith in the Vatican. He speaks Italian, French, English, Latin and is a Chinese scholar. Yet in spite of his brains, Bishop Yu-pin is sweet and very human. All the high church dignitaries in Paris came to our reception. There were Cardinal Verdier, the Archbishop of Paris, and the Papal Nuncio, all very grand in their scarlet robes. The Chinese bishop, who towered over me, looked equally impressive in his bishop's gown and purple sash. The Catholic society of Paris, some eight hundred strong, bowed or curtsied, kissed his ring and addressed him as "Monseigneur." It must have seemed a far cry from guarding buffalo in Heilungkiang.

The sole touch of levity in the stately proceedings was when Wellington Jr. stood in the receiving line while his

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father was at the telephone. A prominent, but not too bright, Parisian banker shook hands with Junior. Later, he confided to friends he could not understand China's sending a mere boy as Ambassador to France.

In 1934, while Wellington was still Minister to France, he returned to China to report on his League of Nations work and discuss the Japanese situation. Because of a definite flair for fathoming the Nipponese mentality, Wellington had handled Sino-Japanese affairs since the beginning of his diplomatic career. Now he was convinced the inevitable clash with Japan was far closer than generally suspected. He was determined that China prepare for any military eventuality.

Wellington left Paris in the early spring, but I waited until my sons' school term ended. I was delighted to take the boys back to Shanghai. They had done well in their studies, but their Chinese was deteriorating fast, and I was afraid a foreign education would destroy their national characteristics. Besides, they needed the discipline of a strict boarding school, for they were always underfoot and although I loved them dearly, their pranks got on my nerves.

Wellington Jr., who was twelve, had recently developed a passion for chemistry. In short order he killed all the flowers in my garden with strange medicaments and injections of queer-colored liquids. Together, they tossed into the Bois de Boulogne lake a dozen of those small chairs which rent for a few sous in French parks. Nabbed by an angry old woman, they slipped from her clutches and hid in the woods. They were holy terrors in Geneva. The imps slipped snowballs into the secretaries' shoes, at night prowled through the hotel halls scrambling boots, and sneaked into bedrooms to mix coats,

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trousers and waistcoats. Their table manners were even more provoking. Salt cellars were filled with sugar, and then passed innocently to our guests.

At home, Freeman, who was annoyed by the attention I paid my dogs, ceaselessly contrived their corruption. Indirectly, he was responsible for ruining some of my best rugs. One of the Pekes was notoriously greedy. With fiendish ingenuity Freeman placed a tidbit of meat at the bottom of a deep bowl of water. To get to the meat my pet had to drink the water. Morning after morning the rugs were spoiled. It took me weeks of sleuthing to solve the mystery. They both delighted in kidnapping my tiniest Peke, then marooning him on a high shelf amidst a welter of valuable bibelots. While I ransacked the house and grounds, the frightened little creature would squat motionless as a statue on his perilous perch.

Freeman was my severest critic. His logic was devastating. To come home late at night and to own dozens of dresses was all wrong, he announced. Hadn't he been taught that an early bedtime and just enough clothing to keep a person warm and clean was the right way to live? Wellington Jr. was more lenient. He loved to have me happy and was proud of my appearance. Every evening my maid solemnly consulted him about the gown I was to wear. And invariably, I put on what by eldest son chose. Even at school Wellington Jr. was clothes-conscious. He hated to see his room teacher continually in the same dress. "I don't expect you to be like my mother and change your clothes four times a day," he said condescendingly, "but I do think you might at least wear two dresses a week. I object to seeing the same dress month in and month out!"

Once in Shanghai, my sons were enrolled at St. John's, the same school their father had attended thirty years

French Accent

before. Wellington was delighted to find St. John's austerity unchanged, for he thought the boys had been too comfortable at home and needed to be toughened by hard living. The rooms were still unheated and the students still supplied their own furniture, lamps and linen, and the meals were as skimpy and monotonous as ever. I had a Chinese tailor make a series of wool and fur-lined long robes, and like other indulgent mothers, sent food to them several times a week. They came home weekends, and I visited them occasionally, shivering miserably in their draughty room. But they were hardy young animals and, wrapped in their cozy gowns, seemed impervious to the temperature.

When the present Sino-Japanese war broke out in 1937 I cabled my sons to return to Shanghai from Tsingtao, where they were summering. They had scarcely reached Shanghai when the bombardment of that city started. Bombs fell around Mama's apartment, and St. John's College, which was in the battle zone, had to be closed. My boys returned to France on the first possible ship and before long were back in the MacJannet School, where they were both to graduate in spring. The principal, Mr. MacJannet, was an American, so Dean Beekman of the American Cathedral and members of the American embassy attended the graduation ceremonies *en masse*. As Wellington Jr. had won the school oratory contest, his father agreed to give the graduation address. He spoke with his usual conservatism, urging the students to work hard. He ended with the gloomy observation, "There is always time for pleasure later on." Wellington Sr. was scarcely seated before Wellington Jr. strode onto the platform to deliver his class valedictory. With the poise of a roman senator, he launched into a fiery defense of youth and with devastating logic contradicted each careful contention in his father's speech. The audience gasped with

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surprise when they realized what he was saying, and stared at the ambassador to see how he was taking it. Secretly, he was very amused and proud of his son's daring philippic, but he managed to keep a straight face.

(28.)

Wings to China

I was the first woman to fly from France to China. As I had travelled so much for vital reasons such as life, death and politics, it seems amusing that my only dangerous trip was ventured for no more thrilling reason than interior decoration! Now that the diplomatic status of China in France rated an embassy, my husband and I searched diligently for a suitable building to fill the requirements of our scintillating new position. We chose finally a dignified private hotel on the Avenue Georges V. I was delighted with the roomy house and was determined to furnish it completely in Chinese style. Time was short and we needed furniture, carpets, porcelains, a thousand other things. It would be

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quicker, I decided, to fly to China, do my shopping personally and see my boys who had been at school in Shanghai for almost a year.

When I left Paris one foggy morning, the whole embassy staff, grave with apprehension, came to see me off at the Le Bourget airport. My spirits soared with the plane as it shot above the leaden clouds. No plane could fly fast enough, so urgent was my desire to see my sons, to touch Chinese soil. We spent the night in Marseilles and at four a.m. our kindly Chinese consul general there motored me to the distant airdrome. We set off for Corfu in an old unheated hydroplane. I sat muffled in furs while we soared over the hidden Mediterranean through impenetrable mists and slanting rain. At twilight, miraculously, we drifted down on Corfu, a mere dot in the Adriatic within sight of the bleak Albanian coast.

Corfu is a delicious island smelling of oranges, oleanders and olives. It was February, yet the terraced hillsides were quilted with violets, the orange trees laden with lime-yellow globes. I toured Corfu alone. I saw the late Kaiser's pleasure palace, a hideous neo-classic fantasy magnificently situated and pompously dubbed "The Achilleon." I paused atop a steep cliff and looked down on a tiny island monastery known as the Isle of the Dead. Here was the mythical rendezvous of the dead, where Charon started ferrying his cargo of spirits to far-off Hades. At dawn the Air-France officials bowed me off, gallantly presenting me with a bouquet of violets and a doll dressed in the Corfu peasant costume.

We settled down on a small Greek island to re-fuel and lunch. It had grown bitterly cold and we waited dispiritedly two hours for passengers who never showed up. We rose again into the cold, with everyone in bad humor. At seven o'clock we arrived at Tripoli-in-Syria, a ramshackle town

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notorious for its bandits. Then we motored for four hours through prosperous Beirut and along the ancient caravan route which wound through the cedared Lebanon hills to Damascus. It was almost midnight when I staggered into a Damascus hotel and collapsed in the last clean bed I was to have in many a night.

At the inevitable four o'clock I drove in an opalescent dawn to the desert airport. We sped through the shuttered bazaar along the famed Street Called Straight, past files of camels, their twitching noses frosted with dew, the drivers wrapped tight against the damp in gaudy jellibas. At the field a rickety old Fokker plane was trundled out gingerly. It was to take me, I was almost too brightly assured, all the way to Hanoi in Indo-China. There were few passengers, my chair extended into a make-shift couch; so though the plane roared like a banshee, I slept soundly while we zoomed over the Syrian desert. I woke before luncheon, thrilled with the idea of seeing Bagdad. It would be like the Arabian Nights, I mused, all marble buildings with cool, tinkling fountains and broad avenues flanked with swaying palms. Perhaps a few beautiful houris, enticingly veiled in chiffon, still existed!

Instead, the Bagdad streets were jammed with dilapidated carriages, the sidewalks swarmed with jostling Arabs and Iraqi. Small donkeys, heavily over-burdened, trotted beside clanging tram cars, moth-eaten camels slouched over the cobbles; occasionally a shiny American automobile shuttled through the weird traffic. Open victorias creaked by, stuffed with women in shapeless black, their faces hidden behind opaque horsehair veils slit at the eyes and clamped with a brass rod extending from forehead to nose. I stared at them, they stared at me, their eyes gleaming through the slits.

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We pushed through a gaping crowd at the hotel entrance. On the threshold the stink of mutton fat engulfed me in a fetid wave. The rancid odor clung tenaciously to everything, food, bed linen, even the obsequious proprietor. One glance at my bed and I knew it would be wiser not to undress. A pack of mongrel dogs snapped and snarled beneath my window; sleep would have been impossible. A plate of curious food was brought to me, but I preferred ordering American canned soup. The soup arrived, lukewarm and strongly flavored with mutton fat. Eating was out of the question, so with a guide I set out for the bazaar. We threaded through alleys where coppersmiths, sitting cross-legged as they had for a thousand years, hammered on their pots. We drifted through the bazaar, jostled carelessly by people who smelt of sweat and mutton. They spat nonchalantly, with no pretensions to marksmanship and I dodged nimbly as a five-year-old. On either side heaps of bloody goatskins were piled, blood trickled thinly among the cobbles, and gory carcasses slapped on hooks made a surrealist dado across the butcher shops.

Though the guide tugged angrily at my dress, I could not resist peeking into the first courtyard we came to. It was an extraordinary sight. In the center, surrounded by a sea of mud, was a low brick structure which looked like a cage. Inside, huddled close together, were about a dozen bedraggled women hugging babies to their breasts. They were chewing betel-nut and spitting the crimson juice out in listless squirts which landed in the mire with a faint plopping sound.

Back in the hotel I spread my overcoat over the bed and lay down fully dressed. Underneath my window the dogs howled despairingly. With taut nerves I listened to the furtive rustlings which filled the night. It was still dark

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when I crept out, and the quavering cry of a muezzin calling the faithful to morning prayer floated down from an invisible minaret. Leaving Bagdad, we roared across the desert, then above desolate valleys bristling with weird rock formations. A dreadful place to crash, I thought with a shudder.

On the second day of flight, after crossing wild mountains and barren reaches, we saw the flat plains of India unroll beneath us. In the golden afternoon sunlight we circled over Benares and the sacred Ganges. Strung along the muddy river, temples jutted in high pyramids of lacy gingerbread, their broad stairways spattered with Hindu bathers in scarlet, green and yellow robes. The Ganges was peppered with bodies brown as its waters, and swooping low we could see half a hundred corpses smouldering on the funeral *ghats*.

Calcutta was steaming hot, surprisingly banal, and the sacred cows were underfoot everywhere. When the Chinese consul general took me sight-seeing we were forced to stop every few minutes because a cow chose to relax plunk in the middle of a busy street. We had to detour around the beast or else wait patiently on her pleasure. In the teeming markets cows ambled from stall to stall, helping themselves to whatever green titillated their fancy. Though the creatures might eat them out of business, the skinny shopkeepers were helpless, for it was forbidden by Hindu religion even to shoo a cow away.

The flying schedules became shorter now. We set out sensibly at seven and the trip became more like a holiday jaunt than a grim effort to cover as many miles as possible each day. We skirted the Bay of Bengal in blithe spirits and at sunset floated down on Rangoon. Nothing could be lovelier than this glamorous city with its spread of green parks and its jaunty pagodas poised like dancers in stiffly

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outstretched skirts. The smiling Burmese, plump and prosperous, seemed far away from the hard life of India.

A crowd of Chinese greeted me at the airdrome. In the evening I took the pilot to a very fine dinner given in my honor by our consul general, and afterwards we went to the Rangoon Fair. Thousands of Burmese milled happily in the lantern-lit streets. The booths and cubby-hole stores apparently remained open all night for no one showed the slightest inclination of going home to bed. The consul general bought me lavish baskets of tuberoses and *frangi-pangi*. I purchased delicately wrought silver boxes and Burmese parasols, fancifully painted and dripping with tassel. A genial jewelry-store proprietor let me plunge my hands, wrist-deep into a till of rubies. The cascade of blood-red stones slid through my fingers, cool and strangely exciting. The consul general and several Chinese ladies bargained fiercely, and for the incredible sum of six American dollars, I left the shop, owner of forty stones the size of small pebbles. Later, a well-known Parisian jeweler valued them at fifty times their original price.

We lunched at Bangkok next day. But I hardly bothered with sight-seeing and made a bee line to the market to buy native fruit—and several doerians! As I was the sole passenger I ventured to bring a few doerians in the plane. In the tiny vibrating cabin their garlicky odor was stifling, but to my astonishment the crew did not object. For once, however, the doerians betrayed me, and I arrived in Vantien, a little town between Thailand and Indo-China, feeling very ill indeed.

I was to transfer from the Fokker to a Chinese plane at Hanoi, the capital of Tonkin in French Indo-China. Hanoi, though tucked away in inaccessible Tonkin, was a miniature replica of Paris. The parks were patterned after

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the Bois de Boulogne, its shops were self-consciously Parisian and the atmosphere was like any small city in France. Even the reporters at the airport interviewed me in French. Hanoi, I soon discovered, was exaggeratedly bureaucratic, and the local Indo-Chinese played little part in its social life.

In Paris we had entertained Monsieur Brevier, the Governor General of Tonkin, when Wellington had collaborated with him in planning new citizenship laws for Chinese born in Indo-China. That evening the Governor and Madame Brevier invited me to dine at the government palace. There were at least sixty guests gathered in the formal reception room, half were local French functionaries, the others Indo-Chinese officials superbly encased in semi-Chinese robes. Their robes were shorter than the old-fashioned Mandarin coats and showed a few inches of white silk trouser leg. Instead of a shallow Chinese cap, their heads were swathed in small compact turbans. The Indo-Chinese women are far less emancipated than Chinese, and as they never dine in mixed company, none were present at the party.

I was seated next to Monsieur Brevier. The native servants, in white, brilliantly sashed, served dinner swiftly and noiselessly. I glanced down the long, gleaming table and noticed that the French officials were placed nearest us, while their Indo-Chinese colleagues clustered at the far end.

Mr. Bata, the Czechoslovakian shoe-king, was the only other foreign guest. He had arrived that afternoon in his private plane en route to China. Mr. Bata spotted my pink and gold sandals immediately. He craned his neck to get a good look at them and after dinner, much to everyone's polite consternation, grabbed my foot in his hand. He inspected the sandals carefully, turning my foot this way and that while he fired a dozen questions in breathless succession.

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Where had I bought the sandals? Were they comfortable? What had I paid?

I stayed in Hanoi two more days. The Chinese plane failed to arrive the first morning. On the second, the governor general's aide-de-camp, the Chinese consul general and his staff and at least a hundred members of the Chinese community trekked to the airport to give me a rousing send-off. The Chinese plane, squatting on the huge field, looked more like a toy than a business-like piece of machinery. It was staffed by two impersonal Cantonese airmen, a pilot and mechanic, both smartly dressed in the blue Sun Yat-sen uniform. The plane's minute cabin could accommodate two unusually thin passengers—one stout traveller would have filled the absurd cavity completely.

After frantic wavings and farewells, I clambered into the toy plane with grave misgivings, and we buzzed off toward Canton. We flew over beautiful country. A river flat as a turquoise ribbon wound industriously through hill-flanked chasms. The mountains stretched, green and brown, as far as the eye could see. We re-fuelled at a village close to the river. The villagers made their living dyeing cloth Chinese blue. The cloth was hung on poles to dry, and festooned the countryside festively for miles around. Before dark we reached Nanning in Kwangsi province, the headquarters of General Pai Chung-hsi.

Nanning, General Pai's model city, was delightful. Obviously run by the military, it was as clean as a new broom and as neat as a barracks, both feats difficult to achieve in a tropical climate. I thought the city almost painfully modern, no one wore the traditional long Chinese gown, its citizens almost to a man stepped briskly in natty blue Sun Yat-sen uniforms. General Pai's aide-de-camp met me at the flying field, and as we drove to the hotel he pointed out

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proudly that the shops stocked Chinese products only, and no Japanese goods were sold in the city.

I was eager to meet General Pai Chung-hsi. He was chief of staff of the National Army and ranked among the dozen most important personages in the country. Partnered with his friend, General Li Tsung-jen, whose headquarters were at Kweilin, the capital of Kwangsi, they commanded some of the best disciplined troops in China and rated among Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek's most capable generals.

The general had reserved for me the best suite in the hotel. Everything was immaculate. I was informed that Madame Pai would call and invite me to dine. Precisely at six o'clock four automobiles drove into the courtyard. There was a tremendous commotion of servants and soldiers as the general accompanied by his staff entered the hotel. I received Madame Pai and her husband in my sitting room.

General Pai, who was in his early forties, was tall and his fine figure showed to advantage in a well-cut gray uniform. Madame Pai was young, pretty and wore her hair in a modish, shoulder-length bob. Her simple, long-sleeved Chinese gown helped disguise the fact that she was expecting a baby.

We dined in a screened-off section of the hotel dining room with the general's staff and their wives. The chef, surprisingly, managed a pleasant foreign dinner climaxed by ice cream and accompanied by a variety of European wines. Instead of a gruff, unpolished soldier, I found the general affable and cozy. We chatted together like old friends. He wished to fly me to Kweilin the following morning to meet General Li Tsung-jen and seemed sincerely disappointed when I insisted keeping to my schedule.

Though Madame Pai had lived in remote Nanning for many years, she cross-questioned me eagerly about the

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latest Paris fashions, and as she was planning a trip to Hong Kong for a new permanent wave, also about the newest hair-dos. I often think of this conversation six years ago in Nanning. Madame Pai must have changed a great deal in a very short time. Now she commands an Amazon regiment, which has acquitted itself bravely against the Japanese. I wonder if she still thinks of permanent waves and Paris fashions?

I breakfasted with the general and his wife early the next morning at the official Yamen, their office-residence. The Pais waited in the courtyard and escorted me to their living quarters. The Yamen was an immense building, spotlessly clean and efficiently guarded by stern sentries. There was no trace of luxury or ostentation and the general's apartment, though comfortable, was sparsely furnished. The breakfast table, however, more than made up for such simple surroundings. An amazing array of dishes was set out for our delectation. There were sweet-tasting river fish, giant broiled crabs, fragrant Chinese mushrooms large as saucers, and half a dozen local vegetables which I could not identify. We climaxed this sumptuous repast with fantastic scarlet oranges the size of finger bowls. I had never tasted such delicious fruit, and my hostess had her soldier-servants send a basket of them to the plane.

The Pais drove me to the flying field. Madame Pai and I sat in the back of the car, and it surprised me to see the general climb in casually beside the chauffeur. From my varied experience with a vast assortment of war lords and militarists, I expected General Pai to surround himself with all the pomp of his position and ride in a separate car with a swarm of bodyguards. At the airport there was little of the usual saluting, heel-clicking and fancy military fol-de-rol. Instead, the general talked pleasantly with the crew of my mosquito plane. Their easy give-and-take with such

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an exalted commander was equally astonishing. Of all the Chinese military leaders I had come in contact with few were as direct and unassuming as General Pai Chung-hsi. After seeing Nanning and its commander, I sincerely regretted not having flown to General Li Tsung-jen's headquarters in Kweilin.

The toy plane proved its mettle by depositing me safely in Canton. I had visited Canton many years before with Papa, but the sleepy city I remembered had been transformed into a whirring metropolis. Broad boulevards replaced the crooked little lanes, sedan chairs had given way to tram cars and stream-lined American automobiles. The "Flower Boats" and the gay ladies had vanished, the waterfront was a dull place after sundown.

The weather continued uncertain, so I took a coastwise steamer to Hong Kong. For five days, while fog billowed in from the sea, I stayed with Laura Chieri, who had recently married the Comte de Courseulles. The delay did not bother me. I enjoyed myself thoroughly and had time to select five handsome dinner services for the Paris embassy.

My heart was in my mouth when I saw my sons at Shanghai. During the year I had been away they had grown enormously and were no longer little boys. To celebrate my arrival they were given a week's vacation from St. John's, their Shanghai school. We spent the evening happily together with Mama and my sister in my tiny house in Avenue Joffre. My Pekinese were there too, and had not forgotten me. Contentment swept over me, I was truly home at last.

(29.)

Paris Protocol

While my husband was Minister to France I had lightly evaded the responsibilities of his position, but when he became Ambassador, the job seemed less of an anti-climax after China, and I regained much of my old enthusiasm for diplomacy. The wives of most diplomats consider France the ideal post, for diplomatic life in Paris is smart and satisfying. Official society is animated and brilliant, and though state entertaining is in the grand tradition, even the most formal affairs have a Gallic verve which prevents them from becoming monotonous.

Shortly after our return to Paris in 1936, an unusual number of ambassadors were transferred to other posts and

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when their successors arrived it developed that only six of the thirteen ambassadors at Paris were married. They ranged from William C. Bullitt of the United States to Jules Lukasietwicz, the attractive Polish representative. The changes in the diplomatic corps and the dearth of ambassadresses catapulted me from the junior to the third ranking ambassadress within a year. My seniors were the doyenne, Madame de Souza Dantas, and the Turkish ambassadress, who adhered strictly to Moslem custom and seldom ventured out of her embassy. Other members of our small coterie were the dark, svelte, Chilean-born German ambassadress, Baroness von Welczeck, and Lady Phipps, wife of the newly arrived British envoy.

Madame de Souza Dantas, wife of the Brazilian ambassador, had been doyenne of the diplomatic corps in France for many years. It was an enviable position which added greatly to her social consequence. A sister of Eugene Meyer, the wealthy American banker, she possessed a fortune of her own and used it unstintingly in entertaining. I had met her when I had lived in Paris previously. During my first months as ambassadress she was of invaluable assistance, explaining the complexities of French protocol and helping me plan my first tea for Madame LeBrun.

The difference in rank between embassy and legation has always been a source of irritation to the less privileged ministers and their wives. In Europe this discrimination was especially pronounced, and the protocol ruling which permitted the President of France and his wife to accept invitations only from the embassies was a constant vexation to the lesser lights in the diplomatic corps. Naturally, the President and Madame LeBrun were considered great social plums, and the ruling was a bitter pill for any ambitious ministress to swallow. The minimum official entertaining

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annually expected of each embassy was a formal dinner in honor of the president and one or two teas which Madame LeBrun attended alone. As Ministress, I had never been called upon to entertain the LeBruns, so as Ambassadors I took unusual pains with my first official tea. Madame LeBrun's acceptance automatically transformed any kind of an entertainment into a function which must follow a set pattern. The invitation list had to be stretched enormously and scrutinized with a knowing eye to avoid any social calamities; and special preparations had to be made for the guest of honor. A room was usually set apart where the president's wife and the various ambassadors were served an elaborate tea at small tables. The tea was no light snack. It was a serious meal heartened with red wine and featuring the national delicacies of each embassy. Meanwhile the other, less privileged, guests would refresh themselves at a large buffet placed at some distance from the presidential party. When Madame LeBrun had finished her tea and chatted with the ambassadors she took her leave, and flanked by her hostess and the wife of the director of protocol, made a "progress" from room to room. The progress was formal, almost royal. Intimate friends were greeted, and a number of people, all carefully selected in advance, were ceremoniously presented.

I liked Madame LeBrun. I sensed her friendliness and realized that her interest, both in me and in the new Chinese embassy, was genuine and not part of polite official routine. Genuineness is one of her most appealing qualities and later, when I knew her better, her capacity for enjoyment never ceased to amaze me. I never saw her bored. She was always alert and pleased with her surroundings, whether at the opera, the races, a stiff dinner party or even when immersed in the round of monotonous embassy teas. Yet for all her poise and assurance, Madame LeBrun possessed an unworld-

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liness refreshing in a woman whose conspicuous position made her a target for every kind of flattery.

President LeBrun was handsome and somewhat of a dandy, his clothes were as appropriately perfect as the dignified costumes which Worth created for his wife. He had more obvious charm than Madame LeBrun and his courtesy was so meticulous that the most suave diplomat seemed *gauche* in comparison. Born of a plain country family, he talked nostalgically about rural life. His passion was gardening, and often he assured me that his most exquisite sensation was direct contact with the earth.

The LeBrun family always remained closely united in spite of their ever-crowded public life, and their married son and daughter appeared at every Elysée function. All four LeBruns were musical, and one of the president's greatest joys was an eight-year-old granddaughter, who has since developed into a remarkable pianist.

I always enjoyed the ornate entertainments in which the diplomatic corps participated *en masse*, and for sheer dramatic pageantry none was as splendid as the annual New Year's dinner which President LeBrun gave in their honor. The dinner preceded a mammoth reception for several thousand additional guests, to which the staffs of the various embassies and legations were invited along with the particular stars of the French army and navy and a frothy leavening of Parisian aristocrats. They were satisfying evenings, romantically crammed with gold braid, decorations, jewels and fastidious French etiquette. The pageant started when the entire diplomatic corps, self-consciously punctual, arrived almost simultaneously at the Elysée Palace. Two by two, we mounted the sweeping red-carpeted stairs between rows of the *Garde Républicaine*, a soldier on each step standing uncannily immobile in skin-tight white breeches, scarlet

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jackets overlapped with shining breast plates, and flamboyant helmets each trimmed with a breasty brass lady and a stiff cascade of horse tail.

The procession broke at the top of the stairs. I always preened a bit while the men peered at the seating plan thumbtacked on a small table and surrounded with a drift of cards indicating each diplomat's dinner partner. Since several hundred guests were seated at the same huge U-shaped table, the plan was a masterpiece of mapmaking, whose intricacies, fortunately, I never had to cope with. President and Madame LeBrun, the Elysée officials, and the director of protocol and his wife formed the receiving line in the grand salon, and as each couple reached the doorway, the announcer in black silk knee-breeches, a heavy silver chain around his neck, called out the complicated names and titles impressively in a booming voice.

The grand salon of the Elysée Palace is one in a series of breathtaking rooms. Superb tapestries cover the walls, and in the light from a myriad crystal chandeliers they glow with the subdued radiance of stained glass. The mellow parquet floors are almost hidden beneath Aubusson carpets, specially woven and so precious that smoking is forbidden. The tapestries, colorful rugs, and beautiful French furniture form a natural and most flattering background for fine frocks and handsome diplomatic uniforms.

Neither cocktails nor apéritifs were served. Monsieur Lozé, the chief of protocol, and his wife would circulate briskly among the guests, introducing any newcomers to their confrères in the diplomatic corps. Finally the cortège was formed for dinner. Couple after couple lined up, and after a stern check-up by Monsieur Lozé, the parade started into the dining room. President LeBrun led, with Madame de Souza Dantas on his arm; Madame LeBrun followed

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escorted by scarlet-robed Monseigneur Valéry, the Papal Nuncio who, because he is a priest, never offers his arm. In Roman Catholic countries the Papal Nuncio maintains an exalted position, since he outranks the entire diplomatic corps, including the doyen. As the Turkish ambassadress was seldom present, I usually followed the president's wife. Protocol is so rigid at state entertainments that when there are few shifts among the diplomats one has the same set of dinner partners year in and year out. Luckily, the doyen was charming and had a diverting faculty for quoting poetry. After several years of state banquets we knew each other extremely well and there was no topic of polite conversation we had not plumbed.

Dinner at the Elysée Palace was in itself a gastronomic sensation, but infinitely more spectacular than the food and flow of perfect wines was the great U-shaped table, set with Sèvres porcelain and blanketed with exquisite flowers. The setting of glittering mirrors and crystal chandeliers, with solemn footmen in black satin knee-breeches ranged in an endless line behind the gilt chairs, was extravagantly theatrical. After the final course, the same cortège re-formed and two by two we returned to the salon for coffee. For those who had been aching for a cigarette, it was a moment of merciful reprieve to be ushered indulgently into another room, where the rugs were less precious and the hazards of smoking were permitted. The president and his wife barely sipped their coffee, and while we relaxed pleasantly they stood in the main hallway receiving the army of additional guests. When their task was completed, the LeBrunns returned to the salon. The diplomatic procession was formed for the third time, a path was cleared through the crowd, and off we would go to the ballroom. It was a wonderful sight. The music was gay, the dancers sleek and prosperous. We stood

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about in groups watching, a little aloof, for we never danced, and after a suitable time, filed into the supper room. The evening, which had commenced with a hearty meal, was climaxed with a second heroic repast. Then, after the Elysée officials gave President LeBrun the signal to retire, the ambassadors and ministers followed suit. But the ball whirled on far into the night.

Each Sunday during the racing season the President of France invited the members of the diplomatic corps to Long-champs. The race meets were dressy, typically French and highly enjoyable. The presidential pavilion is very different from the royal enclosure at Ascot. The French Republic actually supplied a special "bookie" for the convenience of his guests, and there was the inevitable buffet which functioned continuously from the first race to the last. The president and his wife sat side by side on red plush and gilt armchairs in the exact center of the pavilion, where the public could get an uninterrupted view of them. In a prim row beside the president sat the ambassadresses while the wives of the cabinet ministers lined up beside his wife. The pavilion was on the small side and there were not enough chairs for the men, so they stood behind the ladies. Even at the races protocol raised its ugly head. Should some careless ambassadress forget her rank and sit too close to the president, the omnipresent wife of the chief of protocol tactfully put her in her proper place.

Evening racing on the flood-lit track was exciting. Women wore evening gowns, light wraps and bandeaux of flowers or feathers on their hair. Tents for dining or dancing were set up, and beyond the paddock a covey of booths sprouted just for the night.

It was a light-hearted, Gallic show, and perched high as we were in the president's pavilion, every sparkling facet

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was spread before us, the fashionably dressed women parading on the turf below, the tents open to the evening breeze and the tinselled booths, their tawdriness dimmed by distance into gold. As a dramatic finale the flood lights switched off for a dizzy moment, and then the darkness was shattered as a rush of rockets stabbed the sky.

Several times a year the Elysée presented the presidential opera box in turn to the various embassies. The offer had to be accepted, and while it was a coveted honor to occupy the state loge, it had certain disadvantages. Only guests in the front seats could see the performances. The box is curiously placed in the *avant scène* on one side of the house, next to the stage, three quarters of which is thus rendered invisible. That the President of France has the worst seat in the opera house does not seem to bother the French. They have solved the problem in a practical manner by setting a series of cleverly angled mirrors into one side of the box, so that those in the back seats can see everything on the stage without moving a muscle. During an engrossing performance it is a strange sight to watch some distinguished old gentleman seated in the president's box, his back half-turned to the stage, gazing intently into a mirror.

Diplomatic life in Paris involved a great strain on the digestive system. Only a small part of the official entertaining was done at the Elysée Palace. Our engagement book was studded with dinners, each one a staggering feast, presided over by such dignitaries as the President of the Chamber of Deputies and the President of the Senate, while the Premier and every lesser member of the cabinet gave at least one formal party a year. The wives had their innings afternoons, and the number of "at homes" which an ambassadress had to attend, was appalling. The list of important official hostesses included the wives of the President of the Sorbonne,

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the Chief of Police, the President of the Municipal Council, the prefects of the Seine and, inevitably, the cabinet wives. These receptions were replicas of the teas at which the ambassadresses honored Madame LeBrun. Few men dared to intrude and at each one the same group of women relentlessly made the rounds. They were, to put it mildly, exhausting but to go to a few and omit others would have been a fatal breach of diplomatic etiquette, so I conscientiously put in an appearance at each and every one.

The minor official dinners pleased me especially, partly because they took place in such beautiful and unusual settings. Like most European statesmen, the leading officials in the French government had special living quarters assigned to them. M. Jeanneney, President of the Senate, and his wife lived in the Senate in a charming apartment famed for its winter garden which opened out into a lovely old-world flower plot. Monsieur Herriot, who combined the Presidency of the Chamber of Deputies with being Mayor of Lyons, occupied a magnificent series of rooms in the Chamber of Deputies building while Monsieur Vincent Auriol, the Minister of Finance, had the privilege of entertaining in the Ministry of Finance, a dignified old palace which has a delightful view of the Seine. The Auriols were fashionably sophisticated and their chic dinners had the added lustre of being served on magnificent silver and gold plate owned by the Finance Ministry.

Monsieur Auriol was a life-long friend of Leon Blum, who was Premier of France during Wellington's first years as Ambassador. I grew very fond of the late Madame Blum, whose delicate, intellectual face was so lovely to look at. Despite her physical frailness, she was extremely able and made Monsieur Blum a wonderful wife. She spoke English fluently and amazed the more conventional French by chauf-

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fering her husband about Paris. Monsieur Blum's neat sense of humor turned stories on himself. He was especially amused by a curious myth which credited him with owning an unique collection of old silver. The tale of his non-existent collection spread far and wide, but the premier claimed that he had never purchased as much as a silver salt spoon.

(30.)

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The king and queen of England were scheduled to make their state visit to France in June, 1937. In anticipation, the ladies of the diplomatic corps and the wives of French officials worked themselves into a frenzy, worrying about their clothes. They met in a series of solemn conclaves to decide whether they should wear long or short skirts to the afternoon receptions, and whether their evening gowns should be equipped with trains. There was a serious predicament, for the ladies wanted to conform to the queen's taste yet Norman Hartnell, who designed the royal wardrobe, would furnish no clues and concealed his masterpieces with Machiavellian cleverness. Eventually a faint rumor swelled

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into certainty. Quite definitely the queen was to have short daytime dresses and a train at night. So the official ladies ordered their frocks, in calm assurance that they were right.

I was an interested, but somewhat unaffected spectator to this sartorial struggle. My clothes problems were automatically solved since, immutably, Chinese robes reach to the ankles in daylight, to the floor after dark. When the queen arrived in Paris her costumes wrought consternation among the official ladies who had spent so much time and money on their frocks. I, however, fitted naturally into the picture, for Her Majesty's afternoon gowns swirled around the royal ankles, and only the queen and myself made an evening appearance without a train.

Just as the royal programme was in order, the last untidy traces of the Exposition whisked away, and Paris giddily decorated, Queen Elizabeth's mother died. The royal visit was postponed to a later date, and we were very much relieved when it was announced that the original plans were to remain unchanged. The round of elaborate entertainments, we felt, would lose half its glamour if the queen decided against coming. Protocol decreed that we of the diplomatic corps were to turn out *en masse* for all festivities, and the feminine contingent would have found the gala round exceedingly dull without a queen to grace it.

Paris was on tip-toe to welcome their Britannic Majesties. Grandstands mushroomed under the chestnut trees along the Champs Elysées, and every inch of window space had been sold at an extravagant premium. It was scarcely dawn when I was wakened by the rhythmic shuffle of soldiers marching by. From my room I watched regiment after regiment swing along toward the Champs Elysées, where they were to stand, shoulder touching shoulder, in a solid phalanx from the Arc de Triomphe to the Palais d'Orsay. When the soldiers dis-

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appeared the avenue still swarmed with police on foot and on horseback, while unsubtle detectives, obviously uneasy in civilian clothes, patrolled the avenues with elaborate casualness. Abruptly, guns began to thud slowly, one by one, in a royal salute. Below me there was a stir and a ripple of staccato sound as passers-by started running towards the Champs Elysées. The cannonade continued importantly, a band clashed into a lively tune; in the distance a dull roar commenced hesitatingly, then surged to a deafening crescendo as the procession approached. The pace was incredibly swift, and I could mark its progress as the subsiding cheers faded off into a whisper.

The official dinner in honor of Their Majesties was given that same night at the Elysée Palace by President and Madame LeBrun. It was a lovely July evening, and since we had been instructed to arrive punctually half an hour before the king and queen, it was still daylight as we mounted the Elysée stairs.

The assemblage which crowded the great salon was unusually glittering. It seemed as if the women had ransacked their jewel boxes, decked themselves with every carat in their possession—and then borrowed more. Like myself, many of the diplomats' wives were weighted down with impressive diamond tiaras, which had been loaned by obliging Parisian jewellers especially for the occasion. The men positively jangled with decorations. Brilliant lights, the mass of people wedged closely together made the room oppressively hot so Ambassador Bullitt and I managed to wriggle our way slowly to an open window. The faint breeze was a welcome relief and from our vantage point we had a superb view of Their Majesties' arrival.

Drawn up stiffly at the entrance were officers of the *Garde Républicaine*, the Elysée staff, Monsieur Lozé, chief of pro-

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TOCOL, and his assistants, whose duty it was to escort the King and Queen into the Palace. Precisely on the hour a company of Republican Guards trotted briskly through the Elysée gates, metal accoutrements clashing noisily, horses' hooves spurting miniature geysers of gravel.

The king's limousine was almost concealed amongst the cavorting horsemen who, with an exaggerated flourish, pulled to a stop at the entrance. The king, his pencil-slim figure breathlessly sheathed in a scarlet jacket and skin-tight trousers, handed the queen out of the car. Her Majesty emerged slowly and, in settling her wide hooped skirt, dropped a small lace fan. Officers, protocol and Elysée jackknives simultaneously, but the king was more agile and retrieved it with the most perfect grace.

Following Their Majesties, came a quick succession of cars; a cavalcade of distinguished Britishers, calm, encased in an armor of cool pride and utterly impervious to the heat. First was the Mistress of the Robes, the picture-book Duchess of Northumberland, tall, willowy, peaches-and-cream fair; then His Majesty's staff, a sprinkling of generals and, most conspicuous, the lanky Lord Halifax who stoops pleasantly from the aloofness of almost seven feet.

Ambassador Bullitt and I turned from the window only when the king and queen entered the room. Their Majesties greeted President and Madame LeBrun in a simple, friendly fashion and when this brief formality was over the guests were presented individually. There were more than four hundred of us, the presentations took a long time and I had ample opportunity to watch Queen Elizabeth without appearing rude. I thought she was infinitely prettier than her photographs. Her figure was thinner, her face more animated, her exquisite complexion was totally devoid of make-up and her eyes were a really lovely shade of blue. I

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noted every detail of the royal costume, the white lace gown threaded with diamante, its romantic skirt, so flattering to the queen's waistline; the magnificent necklace of single, walnut-sized diamonds, quite outshone by the Koh-i-noor blazing superbly in the queen's bandeau. A chain of diamonds was twisted about one wrist, her nails were without polish and, besides a gold wedding band the queen wore only one, unostentatious, diamond ring. The sole staccato note was the blue ribbon of the Order of the Garter worn on the upper arm, and the scarlet of the *Legion d'Honneur* with which the queen had been decorated a few hours earlier.

The presentations made, the diplomatic corps began to form the procession to dinner. The parade progressed at a dignified pace. Queen Elizabeth and President LeBrun led the march while Madame deSouza Dantas and the Papal Nuncio separated me from the king and Madame LeBrun. So I swept along sedately in my stiff pink satin robe, my long white gloves and a handsome borrowed tiara which pressed heavily atop my head.

For once the great U-shaped table could not be stretched to seat all the guests and another table had been set up in the corridor. The dinner started smoothly enough with Monsieur Lozé, the chief of protocol, suavely circling the main table, his sharp eyes taking in every detail—alert for any slip-up in the service. I was almost within touching distance of the king and it amused me to see, carefully concealed among the welter of wine glasses, a rack of toast and several pats of butter. I kept an observant eye on the queen. Her Majesty made no pretense of sampling the inspired menu and I doubt whether she raised her fork half a dozen times while chatting gaily with President LeBrun.

As the dinner neared its climax, President LeBrun rose to propose a toast to Their Majesties. I reached for my cham-

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pagne glass. It was empty. I glanced right and left surreptitiously, everyone was staring at their champagne glass with curious concentration, just as if they were face to face with a snake or an unpleasant ghost. Incredible as it seems, the footmen had forgotten to pour the champagne. The President was well launched on a flight of eloquence; it was too late to do anything, and none of us dared look at the Chief of Protocol for fear he might fall dead of mortification. With supreme aplomb everyone snatched their empty glasses and dramatically gulped down the King's health in nothing. His Majesty rose to the occasion with great tact. Aware of what had happened, he ignored his champagne glass and returned the toasts in white wine.

After dinner we sat in the garden which was deliciously cool. The men talked with the king, the women sat in groups, taking care not to crowd too near the queen. With clock-like precision Madame Lozé fetched each Ambassadress in turn and seated them beside Her Majesty. We were permitted a five minutes' conversation, no more, and when the allotted time was up Madame Lozé glided up with a fresh replacement in tow. It is a difficult task making conversation with a queen even under the most propitious circumstances and the knowledge that I had just five minutes to try to be stimulating almost unnerved me. The best I could do was to tell the queen how disappointed we were not to see the young princesses. Her Majesty smiled cozily. She obviously delighted in talking about her children and replied like any mother that her daughters were too young to be taken travelling and it would not be fair to interrupt their studies. The queen was unaffectedly at her ease with me. I found her sweet and womanly.

Wellington was evidently far more scintillating in his verbal encounter with royalty. His Majesty chatted briefly

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and asked, with a smile, what Wellington did when he met the Japanese Ambassador at social functions. The king laughed heartily when my husband said that he avoided the Nipponese representative whenever possible but if chance brought them face to face they pretended not to see each other. The evening programme was rounded out by a playlet in which Sascha Guitry, as Louis XIV, strutted in his most elegant manner and after a truly epoch-making "supper," we went home to gather strength for another strenuous day.

The following night the Opera House was taken over by the state and a gala performance staged in honour of Their Majesties. The audience was hand picked by the Department of Protocol who meticulously catalogued each person and seated them according to rank. The classification was mercilessly accurate and if anyone in Paris had any illusions about their social importance, they were speedily disillusioned. Outside, the Opera House was flooded with cyclamen light which threw each baroque convolution into sharp relief and sprayed the high-arched, open galleries in tender mauve. The Opera square, the streets fanning out on each side were packed solid with Parisians who had stood for hours, waiting patiently to glimpse the royal visitors. Inside, the semi-circle of boxes was festooned with flags and the center loge, reserved for President LeBrun and the guests of honor, was an extravagant nosegay of flowers.

Below, the orchestra presented a lush pattern of black-coated men, their impeccable shirt bosoms gleaming frostily, and bejewelled women whose deep décolletages made them appear startlingly naked as we looked down from the high vantage of our box. The Brazilian Ambassador and Madame de Souza Dantas had the box next to President LeBrun, we were on their other side, almost in the center of the grand tier and I noticed that though the ladies of the diplomatic

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corps had on handsome new evening gowns, most of them wore the same jewels as the night before.

At the first, faint sound of cheering all of us hurried from the loges and, lining the balustrade overlooking the broad, red-carpeted stairs, waited for the king and queen to make their entrance. It was a glamorous sight, made perfect by the leading characters who looked as young, handsome and happy as the world expects a successful king and queen to be.

A fanfare of cheers wafted Their Majesties triumphantly into the Opera. They paused in the foyer and as their suite fell into line, two footmen in knee breeches, powdered wigs and gold-frogged red livery, silently materialized. Though both balanced a massive silver candelabra, they managed to bow ceremoniously, wheel with military precision and start up the stairway without a flutter of expression on their impassive faces. They mounted the stairs steadily, glancing neither to right nor left, the candelabra held high and flames flickering recklessly. The king and queen followed a few yards behind, walking slowly as if they were enjoying the moment and wished to prolong it. The crimson carpet made a perfect foil for Her Majesty's billowing white gown, slashed with the scarlet ribbon of the *Legion d'Honneur*; the royal diamonds gleamed with every movement while the Koh-i-noor, trapping the dancing candle light, flashed in sultry glory. The queen held her dark head high, the tips of her gloved fingers rested proudly on her husband's hand, and there was something so warmly possessive in this slight gesture that even the most unperceptive of us sensed the close intimacy between them.

Two by two in glittering sequence the royal suite followed Their Majesties up the crimson stairway, and as the royal couple reached their loge the orchestra struck up "God Save the King." The audience surged to its feet and stood, scarcely

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breathing, until the last bars of the British and French national anthems had died away. The programme was arranged to please Queen Elizabeth, an enthusiastic patron of the ballet, but the audience was in such a flutter of excitement that Serge Lifar's dancing was scarcely appreciated. During the *entr'actes* refreshments were served the royal party in an ante-room to their box. French officials came and went importantly and the small room was so crowded that none of the diplomats had an opportunity to approach Their Majesties.

The following afternoon it was piping hot at Bagatelle. The women looked serenely cool in their thin fragile dresses but the men must have been desperately uncomfortable in the thick morning coats, striped trousers and top hats which were *de rigueur*. Though it was July the famous roses were still in bloom at Bagatelle and by some miracle the lawns had defied the torrid weather and were beautifully green. To ensure a modicum of privacy for the festivities part of the park was fenced off and, at the edge of a small, ornamental lake a theatrical *divertissement* had been arranged. The diplomatic corps arrived well in advance as usual and we were seated together slightly apart from the chairs reserved for President LeBrun, the royal visitors and the French cabinet ministers. We rose as they walked towards us slowly across the grass. The queen held the center of the stage once again. Her Majesty was demurely fresh and unrumpled in her long white dress. Her wide-brimmed hat, dipping smartly, shielded her pink and white complexion. From the tip of her parasol to the toes of her tiny slippers, the queen was utterly feminine and her freshness made all the other women appear artificial in the revealing sunlight.

Once the guests of honour were seated, the programme commenced and for an hour we watched a group of dancers,

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sheathed in varicolored Greek draperies, sway to and fro on a platform built up in the lake. The still water reflected the skillfully manipulated draperies enchantingly, as the dancers were lithe and pretty, the performance was especially appreciated by the masculine element.

When the dancers had swirled away Their Majesties amiably sampled the inevitable, epicurean buffet and, accompanied by President and Madame LeBrun, made a leisurely tour of the gardens. Outside the private enclosure thousands of people were wedged in a solid mass, waiting expectantly for a glimpse of the dazzling visitors. King George and Queen Elizabeth left the path, cut across the lawn and strolled close to the crowd so that everyone might view them. It was a pleasant gesture, instantly appreciated and the crowd roared itself hoarse with approval. Their "Vive le Roi!" and "Vive la Reine!" thundered through the air, scaring bees from the roses and birds from the trees. Definitely Bagatelle was a telling victory for the British Empire and it was won with nothing more substantial than a becoming hat, a giddy parasol and very genuine smiles on the faces of two attractive people.

The climax to the royal round of entertaining was a dinner given by the Foreign Minister and Madame Bonnet at the Quai d'Orsay where Their Majesties were staying. Paris was en gala that night and as we drove to the Foreign Office, the whole city was drenched with light. Traffic moved at snail's pace and the boulevards were jammed with sightseers celebrating enthusiastically as if it were a second 14th of July. In front of the royal apartment, the Seine was grandly illuminated; great artificial fountains tinted with vivid colors cascaded into the river, the bridges and embankments were dramatically flooded with diffused light. Along the left bank, garlands of fine buildings glittered ostentatiously. There

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was excitement in the flaccid summer air which smelt of dust and acrid smoke of magnesium flares.

As the reception rooms of the Quai d'Orsay are comparatively small, the dinner guests were far fewer than at the Elysée. Only eighty guests sat down to the superlative dinner. I noticed, quite casually, that the footmen serving me looked curiously familiar and glancing about I realized that half the waiters from the Ritz Hotel were hovering around the table trying not to seem uneasy in their white wigs and fancy livery. Olivier of the Ritz, the most snobbish maître d'hôtel in the world, was in command marshalling his men suavely. But for once Olivier's remarkable sang froid was somewhat shaken, his usually pale face was flushed with excitement and he fluttered, almost too solicitously.

We had coffee in the garden under a sky blanched by the city's festive lights and afterwards crowded politely inside to watch Maurice Chevalier and Yvonne Printemps do their stint in entertaining the royal guests. It was oppressively warm in the overfilled room and just as Chevalier had launched into a gay song, we heard the wildest shouts, first in the distance, then swiftly swelling to a crescendo. The sound was so uncanny that instinctively I shivered with apprehension. I sensed that those around me were also disturbed, though they obviously tried to disguise their unease. Suddenly, a great wave of relief washed over me, the clamor, becoming more insistent, enabled me to hear what the crowd was shouting. It was the old refrain "*Vive le Roi! Vive la Reine!*" Thousands had swept across the Seine, gathered as near the Quai d'Orsay as they could manage and by yelling themselves hoarse hoped to induce the king and queen to make an "appearance." Naturally the theatrical performance was somewhat marred by the uproar and when it was over Their Majesties quit the room hastily to show themselves

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on the balcony of their apartment. When the king and queen stepped out in full view of the vast tide of people, bedlam broke loose and in the salon where we were the crystal chandeliers tinkled alarmingly with each salvo of cheers.

Their Majesties were returning to London the following morning. Their visit had been an unprecedented success from every point of view. Socially, they had been sufficiently sophisticated to make an impression on a group of unusually worldly people; politically, they had pleased critical French officialdom by their naturalness and familiarity with the French language, but far more important, King George and Queen Elizabeth had captured the imagination of the French people. Their youth, good looks and sincere effort to please, touched the everyday Frenchman who offered his homage spontaneously without being urged.

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After my years in China, where housekeeping bother is reduced to a carefree minimum, I found the management of a large European Embassy a complicated chore. Our Embassy was like a small, popular hotel. The ground floor, where the chancellory and secretaries' offices were beehived, hummed with activity from morning to night. At the entrance was the receiving room, a sort of catch-all for those who came to the Embassy without appointments, and where books and papers used in chancellory affairs were stacked in tidy piles ceiling high. In a tiny cubby-hole, weaving his telephone wires with the skill of a practised old spider, sat Antoine, who had served Chinese diplomats faithfully for thirty years. Upstairs

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were the reception rooms, three of them, including the large drawing room which was about sixty feet long, the official dining room and the Ambassador's writing room. We lived our private lives on the floors above. Both Wellington and I had our own suites, and there were bedrooms for the two boys and a handful of guest rooms. But most important of all, on the fourth floor close to our private dining room was the sacred domain of my Chinese cook.

To keep the Embassy running smoothly, twenty servants were employed; half were French, half Chinese, and they were always separated. The French staff was in charge of the reception room floor, the Chinese served my husband and myself. The French chef presided over the impressive main kitchen and, like his Chinese confrère, had his own satellites. But they seldom met and never collaborated except at our more important dinners, where I made a point of introducing one or two Chinese dishes into the European menu. The Chinese staff managed our strictly private parties, but at the official dinners, which were served by the French maître d'hôtel and footmen, I always stationed my Chinese butler behind the ambassador's chair and a second Chinese manservant behind mine. Both were dressed in crisp Chung Shan uniforms, the national uniform which has largely replaced the traditional Chinese long gown. Their function was entirely ornamental and a bit of swank on my part. Yet they looked so chic, rigidly at attention, that I could not resist showing them off.

The three young secretaries attached to the Embassy were worth their weight in gold for in addition to their regular duties many of the tedious household tasks were heaped upon their unprotesting shoulders. Their lives literally revolved around a series of voluminous lists as everything in the Embassy from a silver toothpick to the grand piano, was

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meticulously itemized. The burden of responsibility was equally divided among this industrious trio; one was in charge of the furniture, crystal and porcelain, as well as wines, cigars and cigarettes; another paid the household bills, wages, food, garage and incidentals, while the third kept track of the Ambassador's engagements and the guest lists. These extra-curricular jobs were no sinecure. After every entertainment, lists had to be checked carefully, reports made on wines consumed, tobacco smoked, damage to china and glassware. There were a dozen other annoying little matters to attend to; all visiting cards had to be filed for future reference, an informal dossier was kept on each dinner at the Embassy which noted the date, guests present and the menu used. With this information always on tap, entertaining on a large scale was greatly simplified.

An important part of my role as Ambassadors was planning our official dinners and receptions. I knew long in advance the minimum number of entertainments required. As long as I overlooked no one of importance I dared to introduce new blood and make an evening at the Chinese Embassy amusing. I decided the kind of party I wanted, chose the guest of honor, then with my lists in hand I picked out the guests and visualized the seating plan. Thinking of the dinner as an entity enabled me to make a supplementary list so that should anyone drop out at the last minute the gap was easily filled by a congenial substitute.

Dinner invitations were mailed three weeks in advance, luncheon invitations a week later, and when the acceptances were received I carefully revised my original seating plan according to protocol.

In the summer of 1937, soon after the undeclared Sino-Japanese war broke out, I was very busy organizing war

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relief charities. The response was wonderful during the first months of the war. We received donations from the most unexpected sources. A mysterious man left five hundred francs with the concierge. The money was sealed in an envelope scrawled with the words "Vive la Chine." The Chinese laborers in France pledged five francs a month from their hard-earned pay. My Chinese servants voluntarily offered ten percent of their salaries for the duration of the war. The most touching sacrifice of all was made by a French girl who, having no money to give, sent me her engagement ring to sell.

I sent out thousands of personal appeal letters. I grew surprisingly ingenious in thinking up ways to raise money from my friends. With other Chinese ladies we arranged charity bazaars, tea parties and concerts. We canvassed all the Chinese shops, asking them to donate goods or sell them to us at cost price. Many prominent Chinese ladies journeyed all the way from London and Geneva to help at my gala benefit performances. They wore Chinese dress and danced Chinese dances. I recruited an orchestra among the local Chinese and persuaded General K. M. Chu to be my *chef d'orchestre*. Finally, with Mr. C. T. Loo as my treasurer, I engaged the Salle d'Iena for a concert. All six hundred seats were filled and I sold the boxes, some of them several times over, for five thousand francs. It was a tremendous success and we reaped a handsome sum for the relief.

Among the scores of diplomats *en poste* in Paris I found Ambassador Bullitt by far the most colorful. He had visited China while he was the United States envoy to Soviet Russia, and I had met him at Shanghai at a huge dinner in the Paramount Ballroom. I remember that he waltzed expertly. In Paris we renewed our brief acquaintance, and soon both Wellington and I were completely subjugated by the Bullitt charm. For his own pleasure he had leased from the French

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government a château at Chantilly. It was filled with lovely antique furniture, much of which he had purchased and arranged himself. There was a natural lake for guests to swim in, which was inhabited by old and very disagreeable carp who nipped toes and sometimes dragged down unwary ducks and gobbled them alive. Mr. Bullitt speaks French like a true Frenchman and knows Paris inside out. Often he invited Wellington to lunch at odd little out-of-the-way restaurants where the most superbly authentic French food and wines were served. Wellington returned from these expeditions in a haze of delight and reminisced for days about the delicacy of a grilled kidney or a filet of sole drowned in an ambrosial sauce. At other times when the two had state business to discuss, Bill Bullitt would have luncheon served cozily tête-à-tête on a small table in the Embassy drawing room. His interest and knowledge of food added lustre to his reputation as a host, and from a purely professional point of view I was quite envious of the perfection of all Bullitt parties.

Ambassador Bullitt was the first to introduce the Duchess of Windsor to official Paris society. I was presented to the Duchess at an American Embassy ball just a year after her marriage. It was one of the first functions that the Duke and his bride attended together. Her magnetism was instantly apparent. The Duke was in ordinary evening clothes with decorations and ribbons, while the Duchess wore a beautiful Mainbocher dress of clinging white crepe. Her jewels were marvelous but I had eyes for little except her tiara, a creation of exquisitely set diamond feathers. As we chatted casually about my country the Duke said that Hong Kong was the nearest he had been to China. I laughingly replied I was well aware of this fact, having slept half a dozen nights in the "Prince of Wales Room" while stopping

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off with the Governor of Hong Kong and Lady Stubbs on my way to Singapore. "Her Royal Highness," the Duke continued, "has been in China." The Duchess joined the conversation, effervescently telling me how much she had enjoyed her stay and that even after so many years she could remember a few words of Chinese. Without pausing for breath she rattled off briskly in Mandarin "Boy, bring the champagne!"

A few weeks later the Duke and the Duchess and I met at a Chinese dinner given in their honor by the Comtesse de Martel, whose husband had been French Minister to China for so many years. To please the Windsors, the party was kept small and informal. And, since her husband, then High Commissioner to Syria, was on duty, Madame de Martel decided not to invite anyone with an official position. So for once Wellington was left languishing at home and I was invited alone. It was to be a very special dinner served in Oriental style by Madame de Martel's Chinese servants and several of mine. The food was ordered from a famous Chinese restaurant, and I asked my Chinese chef to prepare a number of delicate dishes for extra courses.

I arrived early, wearing my most decorative Chinese gown and a colossal spray of orchids sent me in honor of the party by Mr. Quo Tai-chi, Chinese Ambassador to Great Britain. Most of the guests were already assembled, and among them were the American-born Duchesse de Chaulnes and Captain Edward Molyneux, the dress designer responsible for many of the Duchess of Kent's fashionable clothes. The Duke and Duchess entered the room with dramatic precision, just as the hour struck. None of us had thought of asking how the Duchess was to be received, so we watched carefully as our hostess curtsied to the Duke, then shook hands with his wife.

Usually Her Grace's chic held the spotlight, but this

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evening I was distracted by the Duke's shirt. After inspecting this bit of haberdashery as unobtrusively as possible I decided that it was made of bath towelling. Imagine my surprise on glancing across the table during dinner, to discover that Captain Molyneux had on an identical creation.

The dinner got off to an excellent start. There were half a dozen nationalities gathered around the table, and when the Chinese wine was first passed the Duchess rose and offered a toast to peace throughout the world. It was simply and charmingly done, and we emptied our glasses silently. The Duchess, I noticed, manipulated her chopsticks skillfully. The Duke who was seated next to me, made an effort but soon switched back to a fork and knife. Both sampled each dish with relish, and whenever the Duke discovered a morsel which especially pleased him, he held the tidbit up for inspection and called across to his wife, "Darling, have you tried this? It's delicious!"

In the drawing room, amongst the women, the Duchess was most unassuming, she bubbled over with gaiety and was altogether delightful. Her husband, she told me, was very much absorbed in gardening. We started discussing gardens, and to my amazement the Duchess remembered the Chinese names of half the flowers in Asia. There was one, she said, whose Chinese name meant "Evening Fragrance." Neither of us could recall the flower's English name until the Duchess suddenly spied in a vase a spray of waxy blossoms. They were English tuberoses, which in Chinese are called "Evening Fragrance."

My Chinese parties were sometimes not as successful as the Comtesse de Martel's. I once invited Sir Charles and Lady Mendl to an elaborate Chinese dinner. Lady Mendl, who usually eats nothing at all, dipped into every dish and pronounced them delicious. Noticing Sir Charles ate very

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little, I apologized to his wife, saying how sorry I was he had not enjoyed the food. Lady Mendl threw up her hands in horror: "Charles is impossible! He only likes bloody red beef!"

I was in Paris during the threatened invasion of Czechoslovakia, while Wellington was in Geneva attending the final meetings of the League of Nations. Tension in Paris had reached the breaking point. The common French people with whom I came in contact, waiters, the corner baker, my favorite hairdresser, all preferred war to uncertainty. To a man they were ready to leave their homes and fight.

Caught by the spreading excitement, I stocked candles and coal, and reserved a quantity of gasoline. I was preparing a cellar air-raid shelter when Ambassador Bullitt doused my enthusiasm. It was no use, he said; according to military report, it took fifteen feet of solid concrete to be safe from a direct hit. They would not bother with shelters at the Embassy.

It was a madhouse near the steamship offices. Most foreigners I knew slipped quickly out of Paris. We were told the French government would soon set up headquarters near Lyons. Our Embassy, in constant touch with other Embassies, wanted me to take a country house in case the city was bombed. The zero hour, October first, was almost upon us. Mobilization began.

Towards the end of September I had to go to Zürich on business. I planned to be away two days, and the sooner I went the better. Two members of the Embassy staff accompanied me to the station. There were no porters. Carrying my suitcases, the secretaries forced a way through the densely packed crowds. Mobilized men were going off to

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the Maginot Line. Nine trains were waiting with steam up to carry them off. The boys were not in uniform, there were no bands playing. You could spot those going to the front by their set faces and their terrible calmness. The families were heartbreaking. All the women were sobbing aloud at the barrier; fathers, brothers, friends embraced the departing soldier, kissing him hard on each cheek. As the men passed the barrier many women, half-fainting, were supported by their relatives. There was no hysteria, only a grim determination to see things through.

After the Munich agreement extreme jubilation and relief spread through Paris. Then reaction set in. The French were beginning to be ashamed of what they called the "act of treason." My hairdresser returned from the Maginot Line disgusted. He and his friends had wanted a real fight.

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In the spring of 1939 I returned to France on the *Paris* after having spent half a year in the United States with my sons. Wellington, Jr., had entered Columbia at the age of sixteen, and Freeman had enrolled at Harvard a few weeks after his fifteenth birthday. The old luxurious *Paris* pitched and tossed like a tired can-can dancer. Each morning I asked my steward if the ship was safe. "There is nothing to fear, madame," he would assure me solemnly. But it was truly a dance of death, for several days after we docked, the *Paris* burned to a crisp in Le Havre.

Soon after my arrival we gave a large luncheon for Georges Bonnet, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who until

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recently had been France's Ambassador in Washington. All our guests were very tense. Monsieur Bonnet told me trouble was expected in September. But if everything could be smoothed over through the autumn, there would be no war.

The Paris season burst into extravagant bloom. I have never lived as hectically as during those last giddy weeks. Everyone seemed grimly determined to wring the ultimate drop of pleasure out of life. One marvelous party succeeded another in such swift succession that they merged into a single fantastic whole. All the champagne, sweet music, glittering gowns and jewels seemed to be concentrated in the twilight faubourgs of Paris. At her Versailles villa Lady Mendl gave a circus party: animal acts, jugglers, all complete. As the finale, Lady Mendl herself cracked the whip while a dozen prancing ponies wheeled and pirouetted daintily. The Comtesse de Beaumont gave a costume ball. Madame Georges Bonnet asked me to take part in her entrée. We met at the Honorable Daisy Fellowes' house, everyone in bizarre Schiaparelli costumes. I switched back a few centuries and wore a lovely Ming robe and headdress. Philippe de Rothschild gave a dinner dance. A dance floor was built over his entire garden, and there were twenty tables, each set for twelve. I was next to Paul Reynaud at the host's table where I had an uninterrupted view of the whole party. Tactfully Monsieur Reynaud's chère amie, the Comtesse de Portès had been seated at some distance. Their love affair was no secret in Paris. It was said that Madame de Portès came of a good Toulouse family and had been a school friend of Madame Reynaud. She was dark, plump, and expensively dressed. She was obviously shrewd, and tirelessly sought out anyone of importance.

My sons arrived in France for their vacation, and together we went to the Riviera. Here everyone was relaxed

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and gay; there was no thought of war. Freeman, however, grew more and more nervous. It might be impossible for him to return to Harvard if war came; he wanted to get on a boat right away. In August, Wellington sent us an urgent wire asking me to return. We motored back to Paris. Once on the road, it was easy to see that France was mobilizing. Thousands of black colonial troops were concentrated along the southern border.

Paris was very jittery. We shoehorned the boys onto the *Washington*. It was terribly crowded, and they slept on cots in the swimming pool.

When war was declared Paris seemed to breathe easily again. There were no demonstrations, everyone was calm, the majority were relieved to have the uncertainty ended. The months trickled by, nothing happened. Nothing was rationed, no one bothered to hoard food, and there was plenty of gasoline. The sirens screamed once or twice, but there were no raids. Gradually all the children who had been evacuated filtered back to town. Women knitted incessantly and despatched parcels of delicacies to the front. The greatest worry was to find ways of amusing their men-folk who were bored sitting in the Maginot Line.

Air raid alarms became more frequent. Everyone tried to buy gas masks, to build shelters. The newspapers were crammed with helpful information—women should wear low heels and keep their hands free. Immediately the smart shops began to sell handbags which could be attached to the belt. We installed a bomb-proof shelter in the Embassy cellar. We had water, first-aid kits, chairs, beds, telephones, special lamps—and shovels to dig our way out should the walls collapse. I ignored the shelter until the Ambassador scolded me, saying I must set a good example. Then I went down dutifully, but sneaked up the back stairs long before the all-

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clear sounded. The alarms came most often at night or in the early dawn. Each evening my maid laid out slacks, low-heeled shoes, a sweater and a gas mask beside my bed. When the sirens screamed she grabbed my jewel case and led the dogs to the cellar. Daytime alarms were the most annoying, for all traffic stopped and everyone scrambled to the nearest shelter.

This incessant scurrying became tiresome, so we rented a small villa, with a lovely garden, at St. Germain, not far from Paris. There we remained, just Wellington, myself, the servants and my Pekes, through the winter. Our only diversion was listening to the radio. The Ambassador went to the city every day. The few times I went Paris was empty; there was no social life, no dancing, and at night the streets were completely blacked out. Food was still being wasted extravagantly, but I was uneasy and cautiously stocked the Embassy with staples and an assortment of canned goods. Later, my secret trove was to prove a life saver.

The little people as well as the big were absolutely confident the Maginot Line would hold. If we ventured any doubt we were treated with embarrassing hostility. Most of the Ambassador's diplomatic colleagues repeatedly assured us the French army was without peer. Less than a week before Holland was invaded the Dutch Minister argued stoutly, "Look here! I haven't moved a thing, I've left everything, pictures, carpets, silverware. I'm even having some of my furniture repaired. I have the most perfect confidence in the French army and the Maginot Line!" The other guests, many of them on Embassy military staffs, nodded in happy approval. Towards the end, in spite of the shining faces surrounding me, I was convinced neither Belgium nor Holland would hold.

Toward spring a flurry of optimism swept Paris. The

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rich, recovered from their first fright, began to entertain energetically. It was like Judgment Day, I thought, with everyone trying to give a good account of himself. At the Foreign Office, however, Messieurs Daladier and Reynaud were often too harassed to receive diplomats. An intermediary was installed to relay all ordinary diplomatic queries and to deliver official answers. This glorified go-between was Monsieur Champétier de Ribbes, a charming man and father-in-law of the late Jules Henri, who had been attached to the French Embassy in Washington for many years.

On May tenth, 1940, the day the Nazis marched into Belgium, we entertained the Rumanian Ambassador and Madame Francovici at a large luncheon. We had private information that Brussels had been bombed, and I was frantic with worry about my half-brother, Oei Tjong Swan, who lived there. Telephone communication with the Belgium capital was disrupted, but after persistent efforts I eventually reached him. He was calm and entirely unaware of any danger. I urged him to take the first train to Paris. But my warning came too late, the last train had already crossed the frontier. A few minutes later the Counselor of the Chinese Embassy was on the wire. He had been educated in Brussels and knew the country intimately. He was positive the Belgians could hold out for three or four months at least.

A week later I arranged a Chinese luncheon for the Duke and Duchess of Windsor and Ambassador Bullitt. His Royal Highness was in the British army, but recently had been in Paris shopping with the Duchess. The Windsors were unable to attend, however, because they left suddenly for Biarritz. But Mr. Bullitt turned up, very worried indeed. He was far

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less optimistic than any other diplomat and said gravely that it was a fifty-fifty chance that Paris would fall.

That same week Wellington went to Tours to inspect the Château de Mézières whose use the French Government had offered our Embassy should Paris be evacuated. What he saw en route convinced my husband that the military situation was extremely grave. On his return he ordered his staff to get ready to leave the city as quickly as possible.

One by one during the following days the whole Embassy staff begged me to go to America. It seemed unfair to leave Wellington in such an unpleasant situation, so I refused to budge. But at last the Nazi planes showed that they meant business; the outskirts of Paris were badly messed up and a few bombs fell in the city. Heavy repercussions shook the Embassy walls. I went out in the courtyard to watch the planes, but was rudely hustled into the cellar. After that, Wellington insisted on my going to St. Jean-de-Luz, a small summer resort near Biarritz and only a few miles from the Spanish border.

I left Paris on June the fifth, but for days beforehand we had been busy packing up. Wellington had found the Château de Mézières inadequately equipped to house the Embassy personnel. Although the owners, an old count and his invalid wife, protested bitterly, he installed a new stove and spent a tidy sum making the place passably comfortable. The couple continued to be so difficult that the Ambassador, to keep peace, borrowed an apartment in Tours for the staff. (All his trouble was wasted, for they remained exactly three days in Tours before following the French government on its flight to Bordeaux.)

On June the tenth the complete embassy staff quit Paris. Though the Germans did not enter the city for several days, already the roads were jammed solid with refugees and

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soldiers. The panic and confusion were indescribable. It took Wellington about twenty hours to thread through the traffic between Paris and Tours, a journey normally accomplished in four or five hours. Here we suffered our first war casualty. The staff had sent ahead a truck piled with their belongings and some of ours. It was completely demolished five days later when the Germans rained bombs on the city.

He reached Bordeaux just in time for a stupendous bombardment. He was sitting as composedly as possible in a hotel lobby, when a terrific explosion rocked the building. To his amazement, a much beribboned French general sitting a few feet away, jumped into the air, then fell flat on his face. "My God!" Wellington exclaimed, "the man's been killed!" But before he could move, the general scrambled up and dusting off his decorations explained with considerable embarrassment that he was fresh from the front and had reacted quite unconsciously.

Communications were so badly disrupted in St. Jean-de-Luz that I had no idea when France really fell. Rumors circulated wildly, and I discounted most of them. I even listened to Pétain's radio speech without realizing an armistice had been declared. In my most pessimistic moments I had never imagined such a fearful calamity. I went out for a walk, and a woman with tears streaming down her cheeks told me the news. I couldn't believe it.

After the armistice, thousands of refugees crowded into St. Jean-de-Luz, thousands more into Biarritz. Many were well dressed, many more wore poor clothes. The roads were cluttered with Belgian and French cars abandoned for lack of gasoline. Every conceivable kind of person was struggling desperately to escape into Spain. The border was practically closed. Often people squatted on top of their luggage for

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days at a time, waiting their turn. The authorities got tougher and tougher. They were crazed with fatigue from their ceaseless work.

Ironically, Portugal was celebrating the three-hundredth anniversary of her independence. Magnificent festivities had been planned, and Wellington was appointed special ambassador to represent China officially at the ceremony. He joined me at St. Jean-de-Luz, and on June twenty-fourth we set out for Lisbon. At first the Spaniards flatly refused to give us a visa, because Franco's government and China had no mutual diplomatic relations; but a telephone call to Portugal ironed out the difficulty, and we drove in a downpour to Hendaye, the border town. There we were to take the Lisbon train.

The frontier itself was a nightmare. Almost fifty thousand sodden refugees stood in the rain or huddled under a few skimpy trees. We waited, the water trickling down my neck, while our luggage was lifted from one shoulder to another across the indivisible dividing line between France and Spain. It seemed to take hours. All told, my husband, myself, the secretary and the servant had sixteen suitcases. The youth who engineered the job charged six hundred francs—twenty-four dollars before the war but an infinitesimal fraction of that amount in post-armistice days.

The train was held up twelve hours both entering and leaving Spain. We spent two nights and three days getting to Lisbon. There were three of us in one compartment, and like everybody else we slept sitting bolt upright. Our train crawled into the Portuguese capital at three in the morning. No one was at the station to meet us. We didn't know a soul. Suddenly, out of the gloom loomed two young Portuguese aviators. One of them saluted Wellington. "We have heard so much about the Wellington Koo who are supposed to represent China at the celebration," he said politely. "Do

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you know them, or by any chance could you be Ambassador Koo yourself?" They piled our luggage on their own car and drove us to the Hotel Aviz, Lisbon's best hotel. Every room was filled, so we went wearily to the Hotel Victoria, where we were given a single room. By this time I was too exhausted to care.

Our guardian angels telephoned the Chinese legation and at four o'clock a young secretary jauntily dressed in top hat and striped trousers knocked on our door. He spoke fluent Portuguese, and in a trice hot tea and delicious little cakes mysteriously appeared. He explained that the minister and his complete staff had been informed twice at the station our train would not arrive before morning.

That same morning the first ceremony of the celebration was scheduled at ten o'clock. The various delegates and representatives, including the Duke of Kent who had flown from London, were to march in a cortège. Luckily the Ambassador's diplomatic uniform had been rescued from Paris. At a quarter to nine, when Mr. Frank Lee, Chinese Minister to Portugal, came to fetch him, Wellington was decked out in all his glory. I was still luxuriating in bed when he returned to change his clothes and entertain at a luncheon. The Portuguese government had detailed a young member of its Foreign Office to take care of us, and by late afternoon we were moved into the Hotel Aviz's most beautiful room. Later I was told that Salazar, Prime Minister of Portugal, had discovered that we were staying at the Victoria, and had insisted on our being moved. He banged the table and said, "This is Salazar's order! The Chinese Ambassador and Madame Koo have to be lodged at the Aviz."

In the evening the President of Portugal gave a huge dinner at the government palace. Some two hundred guests were seated in the long, very handsome state dining room.

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The palace itself was beautiful, and the guests, especially the Duke of Kent and his staff, looked glamorous enough to have stepped right out of a fairy tale. But nothing really mattered to me except the lights. Everything was brilliantly floodlit. After living in blackouts for over a year, it took my breath away and I was completely bedazzled.

Glancing around the table, I noticed that there were no Germans or Japanese, so I concluded that duplicate dinners must have been given. Franco's brother, the Spanish ambassador, was very much in evidence. President Carmona had the Duke of Kent on his right and a Brazilian general on his left. Senhora Carmona was between the Duke and the Papal Nuncio, and then came another Brazilian delegate, myself and Doctor Salazar. Salazar was charming. Tallish, with wavy graying hair, he had a humorous twinkle in his eye and was very good looking. We spoke French, and he told me he loved music, hated dancing, and that when he had visited Paris in his young days he was far less serious than now. He was amused when I talked politics. After dinner, coffee was served in the drawing room. I chatted with the Duke of Kent and President Carmona, whom I found delightful.

The two-hour ceremony at the Lisbon cathedral was hot but wonderful. All the women, including myself, were in black and wore long veils. The Portuguese ladies draped lace mantillas over giant combs. The diplomatic corps sat across the aisle from the delegates. Boy Scouts and platoons of school children were drawn up outside and told to applaud everyone who came out. As each notable emerged from the dim cathedral into the broiling sun he was greeted with a round of clapping which sounded like a thousand seals beating their flippers together. Half blinded by the glare, I

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found myself in a tight spot, sandwiched between the German minstress and the French.

The final splurge was a pageant at the Lisbon Museum. The actors wore Portuguese costumes which spanned three centuries. There was folk dancing and a particularly vivid hunting scene. I shall never forget the live lion tied up in a cart and panting fiercely from the heat.

The train, which had been so crowded coming to Lisbon, returned empty. We had eaten well in Portugal, but once back in Spain only two slim courses were served. At Irun, across the border from Hendaye, a squad of German soldiers commanded by an officer in civilian clothes tramped into our car. The officer told our secretary that he was to escort us across the frontier. He apologized for not being in uniform, saying that he had been awakened and ordered to meet us only a scant half hour before. At Hendaye he offered to have us driven to St. Jean-de-Luz in his car. We declined politely.

Though I was fully aware of the Nazi occupation, it shocked me profoundly to find St. Jean-de-Luz filled with German soldiers. They were everywhere and their cold grey uniforms cast a blight over the cheerful little resort. It was my first real glimpse of Nazis *en masse*, and as we drove through the town I had eyes for nothing else. My husband rebuked me sharply and advised me to behave naturally, not stare. They were ordinary enough, I decided, and strictly disciplined. As we slowed down going through the market place I saw a German soldier and a French girl together, laughing. A Nazi officer cut through the crowd, barked a reprimand, slapped the trooper hard across the cheek, then abruptly wheeled away.

All the important buildings were guarded by German

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sentries, who marched up and down, rigid as wooden soldiers, looking neither to left nor right. Later I watched two French girls sidle beside them and giggle, "Yes, in spite of everything, they are very handsome!"

Wellington left for Vichy within the week, but I stayed on in a villa owned by an English family. They had fled suddenly, leaving their breakfast dishes still on the table. An American friend of mine who lived opposite urged me to move in and protect the house from Nazi seizure. But food became scarce, the markets were closed, and finally it was almost impossible to buy gasoline.

I went to Vichy in August and again in September, returning each time to St. Jean-de-Luz, and going from there to Paris. I made my first trip by car, driving through occupied France, the tonneau stacked with extra gasoline tins which the German commandant had obligingly procured for me. There wasn't a soul on the road. We sped through a continuous graveyard of wrecked cars, most of them overturned, their wheels dejectedly in the air. There were ruins everywhere, and we made innumerable detours around destroyed bridges. We spent the night in a small inn, its first guests since the fall of France. When I last left St. Jean-de-Luz my seat in a first-class compartment had been engaged long in advance. The compartment in which I rode normally held six passengers, but fifteen of us were jammed in, the late comers sitting on the floor. The passageway was packed solid with people who slept sitting on their bags and bundles. No restaurant car had functioned since the armistice, so the Embassy counsellor who accompanied me carried our food in paper boxes. It was a life-or-death struggle to get to the lavatory, especially at night, when only a dim blue light was allowed in each compartment. I wriggled on, over and around a sea of humans, and returning, passed my

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compartment in the dark. It took ages to work my way back, but like everybody else, I had given up complaining and accepted discomfort as a matter of course.

My first visit to Vichy was less than two months after the armistice. The new regulations were already in force, and it was just like crossing a foreign frontier. The Nazis had set up a customs inspection at Moulins, some thirty kilometres away. The station bristled with soldiers. Trains halted until every passenger was thoroughly examined, and each day scores of travellers were stopped and sent back.

Once when I was in Moulins en route from Paris by car, a soldier was detailed to put our chauffeur on the right road. The Nazi stood on the running board, and as we were moving very slowly, I ventured to talk to him. "How long will this war last?" I asked. He shrugged "As far as England is concerned, we'll be there very soon!" "Will peace be declared when you defeat England?" I persisted. He hesitated a moment. "Oh, yes, in three months. But of course we don't know what America's attitude is going to be—that will be a different story."

In spite of Nazi occupation, a spark of revolt burned steadily in Moulins. Night after night some daredevil smeared the walls with huge, wavering anti-Nazi signs. Exasperated because they could not capture the offender, the German commandant fined the townspeople four hundred thousand francs.

I went through Moulins for the last time in the spring of 1941. Certain I would not return to Paris, I had emptied my wardrobe into ten trunks and brought them with me. Though diplomatic luggage was never examined at Moulins, nevertheless every piece was taken off the train and sent on to Vichy a day or so later. Because of their number and unusual value, an Embassy secretary was despatched to

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Vichy to see the trunks properly decorated with Nazi stamps. He chaperoned all ten onto the train at Moulins, but at Vichy failed to notice that one was missing. It had simply vanished into thin air during the twenty minutes' train ride. An unlocked food basket containing precious tinned butter, ham and a bottle of Château Yquem arrived untouched. The lost trunk contained my furs, which were unreplaceable.

In vain, the Embassy telephoned all station masters along the line, in vain a flock of secretaries sped to and fro from Moulins. The Minister of Communications had all the depots searched, but the trunk still remained elusive. Finally I offered a twenty-five thousand franc reward. Days passed, and at last the all-powerful Admiral Darlan learnt of my loss. He ordered the trunk found. It was as simple as that. Mysteriously, the trunk, which had been wandering twelve days, turned up in Vichy within twenty-four hours. The top, which was stencilled with my name and the Chinese flag, had been ripped off, but the contents were intact; not an ermine, not a silver fox had been disturbed.

Vichy is cupped by hills. It is hot in summer, frightfully cold in winter. All year round the air is lifeless. There is one nice park and many long-since-emptied shops. There are two first-class hotels, the Majestic and the Ambassador, neither of which possessed central heating until after the armistice. The great influx of people churned up clouds of dust, though the motor traffic was nil. The local parking lots were packed with cars, useless as the dead beetles they resembled, because only bigwigs could wangle gasoline.

Conditions were chaotic. Within a few weeks eighteen thousand people were said to have been ejected. Only those there on genuine business were permitted to remain in Vichy. Among the first to be expelled were the Paris journalists,

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men and women, who had flocked to Vichy after being deprived of their livelihood by the Nazi-controlled press. Many women, in a frantic effort to remain, paid doctors to certify them as ill, but the authorities cracked down and packed them out of town.

We stayed at the Majestic. We were lucky, for there was hot water in the morning and at night. The smaller hotels heated water twice a week. After a time the bed linen was only changed every ten days because there just was no soap. At first the coffee was fairly decent, there was bread and, on weekends, pastry. Sugar was rationed from the start. Then ration tickets were issued for fats, meat and bread. Sugar and soap tickets were separate, the rationed soap was unusable. The maître d'hôtel collected the tiny colored coupons at meal time. Most people carried scissors and snipped their own ration books for fear the waiter might tear off too many tickets.

Coffee and tea disappeared. My breakfast consisted of two pieces of dark brown toast and of substitute coffee which tasted like, and probably was, burnt grass. There was no butter, no jam; the milk was diluted into white water. Invalids, who needed milk, had to surrender their meat coupons. One good meal was served each day and the menus, considering the circumstances, were not too bad. There might be vegetable hors d'oeuvres, eggs or soup, and a daily meat dish trimmed with vegetables cooked without butter. The meat ration was ninety grams, or from three to three and a half square inches. Beef, pork and mutton were occasionally to be had, but chicken, tripe and sweetbreads were the usual fare. And at that, because of our diplomatic status we ate more than the average French citizen of Vichy. I saved my meat for my dogs, so I became temporarily a vegetarian. I chopped it up with bread soaked in

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water and mixed it with a half chicken which the hotel at first allowed me.

The Majestic's dining room was crowded, and everyone had their favorite table. It was amusing to see the dressiest diplomats parade in, clutching a tiny pot of butter, oil for salads, or a paper bag containing sugar or some secret delicacy. Everyone eyed each other's food suspiciously, anyone with an extra tidbit of ham or even an apple was regarded half enviously, half reproachfully. The most priceless present in Vichy was a ration ticket or two, for this represented real sacrifice. A tin of ham or butter would have been accepted with the same thrill as a million dollars.

My husband's reaction to this new way of life diverted me immensely. In his small bedroom he had stocked a cupboard and almost made it a kitchenette. Here he kept his sugar, his extra rations sent by diplomatic posts from Lisbon, and a precious store of powdered coffee. Once in a while I asked him to share his hoard. He would start water boiling in his electric kettle, arrange the cups and saucers precisely, measure the powdered coffee as anxiously as a pharmacist dealing in deadly poison. Once everything was ready, he would triumphantly produce a tin of condensed milk and cautiously tip a few, just a very few, drops into my cup.

One evening when I dined with some of our colleagues I was particularly hungry. I bade my hostess goodnight rather unkindly. "I thank you for a very pleasant evening, but I will not thank you for dinner because I had nothing to eat!" The menu had consisted of watery soup, cold eggs, hot vegetables cooked without butter, and bread and cheese. But I cannot eat eggs and do not like cheese, so I left even hungrier than when I arrived!

Social life in Vichy limped along bravely. The skimpy

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luncheons and dinners were pretty grim, all the real entertaining was done at bedroom tea parties. The public lounges were available, of course, but they were draughty and a Gestapo agent might be lurking too close for comfort. As no one in the crowded hotels, except possibly Madame Pétain, had a salon, bedrooms became the accepted rendez-vous. There was no tea at a Vichy tea party, and maté, or Paraguayan tea, was served as a substitute. As a few biscuits were considered a treat, the hostess had no worries except making herself agreeable. It always amused me to see the elegant ladies of the diplomatic corps at these functions. Atwinkle with diamonds and cascading with real pearls, they sat on stiff bedroom chairs, nibbled tasteless crackers and acted just as if they were back in their fine Embassies in Paris, London or Washington. Our chatter must have sounded like a crowd of ostriches with their heads muffled in sand, for we never mentioned food, politics or the dramatic events swirling around us in Vichy.

I invited personal friends to my bedroom, but my occasional official entertaining was done in a nicely furnished house which had been put at the Ambassador's disposal by the government. Here, with a staff of ten or twelve, he worked hard from morning to night. Tea parties at the "Embassy" were scarcely more elaborate than those in my bedroom, but I did manage to have real tea and sugar in addition to the inevitable biscuits. I shall never forget the butler collecting left-behind, half-eaten biscuits and putting them back in the tin box!

The only person in Vichy who entertained in almost pre-war style was the widowed Mrs. James Corrigan. Millions had poured into the Corrigan coffers from Mid-Western steel mills, and Laura Corrigan had spent many of them amusing indigent but socially prominent Europeans. When

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all her compatriots had gone home to safety, Mrs. Corrigan refused to quit France. Combining grit and deadly efficiency, she set up her own organization, the *Bienvenue*, to supply French prisoners of war with food, tobacco and clothing. Eventually, her American source of income was cut off, and she sold all her possessions; priceless china, wonderful jewels, her incredible emerald ring, supposedly bought by Goering. She bought food to give away by the ton in Portugal, Africa, anywhere, never asking the price. The *Majestic's* basement was stacked with her cigarettes, chocolates, comforters and medicines. Laura Corrigan, who knew every night club in Europe, started work at six A.M. in Vichy. Even when she broke both arms, a leg and several ribs, falling from a ramshackle horsecab in Paris, she kept right on working from the hospital.

Etiquette demanded I call officially on all the leading ladies of Vichy. I would call on Madame Pétain first. The Marshal's wife lived in Antibes, but came to Vichy from time to time and a bedroom and sitting room were always reserved for her at the *Majestic*. I had met her before. She was still simple, pleasant, and wore a plain blouse and skirt. Her small sitting room was crowded; there were a few naval officers present whom I presumed were admirals because they were festooned with so much gold braid, and several army men. Madame Pétain served no tea or other refreshments, so my call was sheer protocol.

Madame Darlan, a most agreeable person, is plump and filled with domestic energy. The Darlans had taken a furnished house, did things nicely and served a most sumptuous tea of ham sandwiches and homemade cake.

When Admiral and the late Mrs. Leahy arrived, the streets were lighted, a sure sign of special celebration in Vichy. They were accorded a handsome reception, its

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splendor inspired perhaps by the promise of food ships from the United States. The Leahys were given a large house and accorded many attentions. We gave a dinner in their honor.

Promptly at twelve-thirty each day Marshal Pétain, in natty civilian clothes, walked in the park, surrounded by his bodyguards. Many years before, I had sat next to him at dinner in the Elysée Palace. I found him sweet and utterly uncynical. When I told him that a Shanghai street had been named for him he appeared sincerely flattered. He had not forgotten me and always sent his salutations through Wellington. He had wanted to give me a luncheon, but I had to leave Vichy unexpectedly, long before I had intended to go. My husband paid a final call on the Maréchal to inform him of his probable transfer to London. The old gentleman begged him to stay in Vichy, where, he said, Wellington at least was safe from bombs.

The winter of 1940-1941 was Europe's coldest in more than a century. In Paris where I stayed between trips to Vichy, the coal shortage caused terrible suffering. Ordinary citizens were allowed only a monthly twelve kilos, about twenty-five pounds, for both heating and cooking. The Nazis permitted us a little more each month, so we were fairly snug at the Embassy. Gas too was strictly rationed and turned low from noon until six in the evening. There was not a splinter of wood to be bought and in a pathetic effort to keep warm the Paris poor scoured the parks for twigs. As the cold increased they grew bolder and began to saw off branches and even chopped down trees in the Bois de Boulogne. The police stepped in; to carry off branches and twigs became a prison offense, but the practice

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continued. One day I was walking my dogs in the Bois, when I almost stumbled upon a man chopping wood. I asked him why he was willing to take such a risk. "What have I got to lose?" he answered bitterly. "I'm on the dole. I have to stand for hours in a queue to buy food. There is nothing to do in between times, so I chop wood. If I'm arrested I'll go to prison and at least I'll be fed!"

The winter crept along drearily. As food became more scarce, the queues grew longer and longer. Middle- and lower-class housewives fell in line at dawn, yet the supplies were exhausted before half reached the shop. Everyone was granted a dole of ten francs a day. Ten francs did not go very far, and merely kept many in a state of semi-starvation. The Parisian spirit deteriorated, the people bitterly resented their politicians, they became desperate, lawless. There were occasional demonstrations but mostly by young uncowed students. Once I saw several hundred students parade through the streets silently, each one carrying a fishing pole. Now *gaule* is French for fishing pole, and it was their way of shouting "Vive de Gaulle." There was rioting and ten students were shot down. The local universities were closed and not re-opened until rectors more amenable to Nazi persuasion were installed. With two million Frenchmen prisoners of war, the police force in spite of German reinforcements was inadequate. It was dangerous for a woman to walk alone in the parks. Bag-snatching became such a common occurrence that I gave up carrying a handbag.

Every thought, every action, even in the Embassies and amongst the wealthy, was concentrated on food. Towards spring we in the Embassy were given quadruple rations cards, but they did us no good because there was nothing to buy. The "black market" flourished, although the pur-

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chaser as well as the salesman was fined or imprisoned if caught. Tips came from the most unlikely sources; a manicurist or a hairdresser would whisper where potatoes, eggs or a bit of meat could be bought.

Hospitality was absolutely impossible unless guests brought their own provisions to be prepared by the hostess' cook. Once or twice a few intimate friends came to dine at the Embassy with a few slices of meat or a skinny chicken wrapped as carefully as a package from Cartier's. To give something edible to your hostess was a gracious, almost magnificent thing to do. One of the rare evenings I dined out I brought along a pot of butter. When the butter was first passed everyone helped themselves abstemiously. But as the meagre dinner progressed the guests dipped into it with less restraint. When we left the table very little butter remained, nevertheless my punctilious host asked if I intended to take the pot home. When I said no, he smiled delightedly, "Oh good! Then I'll save the rest for my breakfast!"

I had brought back from Lisbon several thousand American cigarettes. When my supply was smoked I asked the American Embassy to sell me some of theirs. To my amazement, they were worse off than I. A million cigarettes had just arrived in France, but the Nazis had confiscated every one. Then I became acutely tobacco-conscious. I would light a cigarette, take a few delicate puffs, and extinguish it. When I craved another smoke I would re-light the stub tenderly, nursing it along until my lips were singed. The rich were as crazed for tobacco as the poor, and many times on the streets or in a restaurant I saw half-inch butts pounced on ferociously by well-dressed men.

Though there was no tobacco and no soft drinks, there was still plenty of ordinary wine. Champagne fanciers were

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out of luck. Within a few months the Nazis had lapped up an incredible amount and carted millions of bottles off to Germany. It seemed they could not get enough champagne, and they drank it as they did beer, gulping it down greedily without stopping to savor the delicious flavor. But in all fairness it must be said that the Nazi officers paid for their expensive taste. With typical opportunism, the proprietors of the night clubs and restaurants were soon charging three hundred francs for a hundred franc bottle.

Shopping in Paris was like an inverted treasure hunt, you went from shop to shop tracking down clues and usually finished empty handed. The stores were crowded with Germans on a buying spree. Like locusts they gobbled up everything in sight, stockings, perfumes, woollens, imitation jewelry, expensive jewelry, cheap dresses and furs—they were especially crazy about furs. Luxury articles, which were unrationed, were easy enough to find, but it took a Sherlock Holmes to ferret out the common necessities. There was no thread, no needles, sheets, towels or cotton goods of any kind. Anything imported, such as tooth pastes or medicines, disappeared too. Day after day I haunted the stores to find Kleenex. One day a rumor spread like wild fire that cosmetics were to be rationed. Women queued up for blocks trying to get into the beauty shops. There was a near riot in front of expensive Elizabeth Arden's. The rumor proved false, but long before clothing was actually rationed a similar scare cleared every wearable garment out of the moderate priced stores. Those with plenty of money could buy dresses at Molyneux, hats at Suzy, and expensive trifles from the wonderful *vitrines* lining the passage between the Vendôme and Cambon sides of the Ritz. Before I left Paris even a millionaire could not find a good pair of leather shoes. The bootmakers, however, were equal to the emergency and

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had started to turn out pretty wooden-soled shoes with wooden handbags to match. German currency circulated everywhere; francs were accepted as legal tender but marks were always returned in change.

Like the food situation, the transportation problem went from bad to worse. By the second war winter in Paris all the large automobiles had long since been commandeered by the Nazis, and no ordinary person was allowed to use a car. The very rich, after unravelling much red tape, obtained an S.P. or *Service de Préfecture* which entitled them to twenty-five liters or five gallons a month. They had all bought some midget machine, usually a five horse-power Simca, and with this meagre allowance plus bootleg gasoline from the black market, which sold at around two dollars and twenty-five cents a gallon, were able to circulate a little. Even these fortunate ones had to stay home on Sundays, when only diplomatic and military vehicles were allowed out. The diplomats were in luck, for each embassy, regardless of how many cars it owned, was given five hundred liters, or about one hundred gallons a month. Thieves were more tempted by gasoline than jewels, and so we had to secure our gas tanks with complicated locks. I remember the chagrin of the Embassy Counsellor, who had put forty-five liters in his car, parked it on a busy Paris avenue and returned half an hour later to find his tank bone-dry.

Motoring in Paris was a mixed pleasure. The Nazis had marked every street meticulously with letters painted in Gothic script on huge boards. Trucks and the devil-may-care Paris taxis had disappeared. Only four thousand motor vehicles were operating throughout the whole great city. Street cars had stopped running, and just one or two buses, driven by steam, had survived. The subway's only rivals were a handful of decrepit old cabbies and thousands of

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bicycles. Row upon row of bicycles chauffeured by boys were lined up at the railroad stations ready to deliver luggage. Owners of *vélotaxis* raked in a fortune. The *vélotaxi*, in spite of its intriguing name, was merely a bicycle with a side car built like an old-fashioned hansom cab. The side car boasted two handkerchief-sized windows and its roof was not quite high enough for a moderately tall man to sit erect. The only amusing sights in Paris that winter were bridal parties being pedalled solemnly along in a string of *vélotaxis*. I could never discover how the bride in her fluttery veil and the groom in his tails and top hat managed to squeeze into the same side car!

Even the trusty *métro*, or subway, had its disadvantages. It ran special cars for "non-Aryans" and shut down promptly at eleven P.M. No one in Paris except the military was permitted out of doors after eleven without an *Ausweis*. Those caught on the streets without a pass were arrested, taken to jail and made to clean Nazi soldiers' boots. An *Ausweis* was hard for an everyday person to get and travellers without permits, arriving after curfew, had to stay in the station all night.

The Nazis in Paris were always polite in whatever unimportant dealing we had with them. But we seldom came in contact with them, though they were everywhere. They had taken over all the hotels, the Crillon and the Meurice being headquarters for the highest ranking officers. Of this fact every Frenchman was acutely aware, for it was forbidden to walk in front of any hotel or building used by the Germans as headquarters. For instance, if I wanted to enter a shop beyond the Meurice, I had to cross to the other side of the street, then cross back again after I had passed the hotel. The officers behaved with great circumspection in restaurants and night clubs. They seldom patronized sidewalk cafes but

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had a number of favorite restaurants, Maxim's, L'Escargot, and Joseph's—who later was denounced by jealous fellow restaurateurs for breaking food regulations. The Vendôme side of the Ritz was reserved for the special use of German officers. Dancing was forbidden, but night clubs like Lucienne Boyer's made good money. While Parisians were forced to leave before eleven, Nazi officers would sit there happily drinking champagne until four or five in the morning.

The few times I lunched or dined in a restaurant I went to the Ritz or to Maxim's. The Ritz bar on the Rue Cambon, once the great American gathering place, was always jammed. The drinks were up to standard, but the plates of giant potato chips, and hot salted almonds were missing. The bandstand at Maxim's made way for more tables; the musicians had gone, but Albert, the famous maître d'hôtel, was still around. Albert made hay out of Maxim's clients by selling hundreds of Ausweises before he was caught and temporarily yanked off to prison. Having been given a stack of blank passes for the entertainers who return home long after curfew, he had sold them to pleasure-bent men and women, assigning them nocturnal jobs as entertainers, waiters and hat-check girls in Maxim's. Without Albert, Maxim's ran less smoothly; the officers needed his suave ministrations; so, bouncy as ever, he returned, none the worse for a few days' rest in jail. The Nazi officers had no food troubles; rations cards meant nothing because they themselves printed them. They stuffed their pockets full of tickets and at one meal used enough to feed a humble Parisian two or three weeks. At Maxim's or the other smart restaurants etiquette seemed to demand that they eat together or with German women; only in smaller cafes were Nazi officers seen with Frenchwomen. However, very few German women came to Paris, and they were mostly uniformed nurses.

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The German rank and file were busy as ants. They were young, blond and curiously unhardboiled. I was told that many of them were Austrian farm boys. Every day squads of them drilled in the parks and in the Bois. They went around in bunches, gawking at the buildings. Hundreds at a time were stuffed into buses and taken sightseeing. They never employed a regular Paris guide; instead an officer lectured in staccato barks. I often pushed close. It amused me to hear him explain the sights all wrong and inject a lethal dose of Nazi propaganda into everything.

But all was not sweetness and light. I saw jumbo army trucks backed up at the Rothschild house on the Place de la Concorde. They rumbled away with some of the most beautiful furniture and the most exquisite porcelains and paintings in Europe. All the Rothschild houses, and thousands of others in town and country, were stripped bare.

To all foreigners, Paris in its isolation might as well have been Mars. I could not mail letters to my children, nor could I receive any. My only communication with the outside was a rare telephone call from Vichy, but this gave me little pleasure as I knew the Gestapo made a record of every conversation. No magazines were published; the only French books were nauseatingly pro-German in tone. All newspapers were printed on one sheet, which was larded with propaganda calculated to incite French against British. There was nothing but praise for the Germans and disparagement for both England and Vichy. With monotonous regularity articles appeared, flaying Chautemps, Geneviève Tabouis, and Ève Curie. The radio was my only comfort. The German stations blotted out almost every foreign programme with a barrage of static. The big and in fact the only event of my daily existence was listening late at night to a very dim Chinese broadcast and at midnight to a five-minute news résumé from the United States. Reception was not always clear but

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I waited up every evening because it made me feel close to America and my boys. I saw very few people. I never visited the theatre or moving pictures, and went very few places in general, so that my movements could not be misconstrued. I was careful to limit my conversation to generalities unless I was with an intimate friend. I fell into a coma and spent my dull days reading paper-backed detective stories which I had found tucked away in a forgotten book shelf.

After the Vichy government had acceded to the outrageous Japanese demands in Indo-China, there was little for Wellington to do in France. Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek transferred Ambassador Quo Tai-chi from London to Chungking as Minister of Foreign Affairs, and asked my husband to replace him. So Wellington became Ambassador to the Court of St. James. I left Paris for Vichy. Later we planned to go to Lisbon, Wellington to see Dr. Quo Tai-chi on his way from England to Chungking, and I to sail for New York and my sons, whom I had not seen for almost two years. Wellington went ahead by car, but I determined to wait in Vichy until my trans-Atlantic passage was arranged. Suddenly the war news grew threatening; it was rumored the Nazis were poised on the border, about to drive into Spain. If I did not leave France quickly, troop movements might prevent my getting to Lisbon.

I took my small car, with my Polish chauffeur, my maid and myself wedged into the front seat. The four dogs and three hundred liters of gasoline were packed tightly in back. We spent the first night in Pau, where the car was put in a freight train and given a lift to the frontier town of Canfranc. The border was quiet, the Spanish officials polite and even debonair. We drove the whole day over rough roads

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which wound through brown barren fields. The few furtive peasants we saw stared at us sullenly; their pitiful crops straggled dejectedly. Even in the remotest corners, in every hamlet as well as in the larger towns, we saw shiny German automobiles. There were many in Madrid. The drivers were obviously Nazis, but dressed in civilian clothes, I never spotted a German uniform. They all carried special suitcases, I was told, so they could whip into uniform in an emergency.

Madrid was blazing with lights. We pulled up at the Ritz and I crawled out feeling ill and half-suffocated from the smell of the gasoline in the extra tins. The Ritz was as luxurious as its name implied. But the thirty-dollar overnight charge for myself, maid and dogs easily out-ritzed all other Ritzes I had ever stayed in.

The following evening we dined at the Portuguese frontier. We had sugar, white bread and lobsters, and filled our tank with gasoline which cost only fifteen cents a liter—or about seventy-five cents a gallon. Around one-thirty in the morning we passed a car on the side of the road; a man waved to us frantically. Thinking it might be a trap, I urged my chauffeur to step on the accelerator. A hundred yards beyond, another man tried to flag us. As the headlights sprayed over him I realized he was Chinese. It was Wellington with the Chinese Minister to Portugal and his secretaries; they had driven out from Lisbon to meet me.

We moved from the Hotel Aviz to Estoril, a gay little seaside resort outside Lisbon. The food was good, the climate wonderful, the hotel excellent. There were lights at night, the gambling casino was running full blast, and London newspapers were only three days late. The Gestapo were everywhere, but they never worried us.

Wellington and I started a tug of war. I wanted to see him off to London, he wanted to see me sail for the United

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States. Finally my luggage, a second maid and another secretary arrived safely from Vichy. There was no excuse for my dallying any longer. I decided not to fly, because if my dogs crossed on a boat without me I knew they would be put in the ship's kennel. If I came along I would be able to keep them in my cabin. At last, on the *Excambion*, the maids, the dogs and I sailed down the river from Lisbon, away from tragic Europe and out into the tossing Atlantic.

I have been in New York now almost two years. I came as a refugee from the fury of Europe's war and in a brief span I have seen this country plunge headlong into the same awful vortex. Here, as in Europe, the lights are out. At dusk I close my blinds and dim my lamps. From the terrace I watch searchlights slashing bright ribbons through the dark.

There is no peace in the world. My childhood home, Java, hot and immutably indolent, is no more. Shells have screamed through its quiet villages, the opulent earth has been torn asunder and in its green jungles men have died. The invader tramps through the land. My relatives, my friends are enslaved.

The home of my young womanhood, my Peking dream palace, is no more. Built in olden times for the beloved of a powerful general, it was a woman's thing, exquisitely graceful and I, loving its beauty and nurturing its traditions, made it my own. Today, the buildings still stand but the soul is dead. A plundering general holds sway and along the echoing corridors, his brutish officers clank on bandy legs.

My Paris embassy is no more. Home of my maturity, fulfillment of my career, its crimson carpets grow dusty, the furniture from faraway China stands forlorn. Each facet of the lovely life which mated Paris to gaiety, has been

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extinguished. The Nazi boot has crushed all spirit from the city on the Seine.

For safety my husband sent me across the Atlantic. Danger followed swiftly but I am thankful that war as I knew it has yet to touch these friendly shores. America is still a haven to the oppressed, the hope of those whose homes have been shattered, to whom the night sky brings no refuge from winging death. America guards the bastions of democracy. To her turn the grim soldiers of Asia waiting the day when the flood tide of her arms and planes will drive the invader from their soil. So also wait those who cherish liberty in conquered lands.

Here in New York life pauses. Outside, a golden sun warms my windowbox fuchsias, on the terrace my Pekinese doze in the shade. Below, traffic hums reassuringly, from the kitchen, where my amahs are busy, drifts the delicious odor of Chinese cookery. In this tranquil interlude mere living absorbs my days. Sometime I will be called back to London to reweave the threads of an existence shattered when the first Germans marched into Paris. New experience, more work will be mine before my story ends.

Careless hours and heedless living belong to yesterday. Today we fight a mighty war to preserve freedoms which only a short time ago men took for granted. Tomorrow, when the business of killing is done, people returning to their everyday round will follow a brighter pattern. Born of the agony of our travail, this new pattern will be replete with more human wisdom and understanding. The free of this world have come together. United they stand on the threshold of enduring peace.

May 1943.

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